100 mm
A5
1.0
1.1
1.25
1.4
1.6
1.8
2.0
2.2
2.5
28
32
36
40
1.0 mm
1.5 mm
2.0 mm
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 322 537 CS 212 487

AUTHOR	Conrad, Bent; Schousboe, Steen
TITLE	Meaning and English Grammar. Publications on English Themes (POET) Series, Vol. 14.
INSTITUTION	Copenhagen Univ. (Denmark). Dept. of English.
REPORT NO	ISBN-87-88648-13-3
PUB DATE	89
NOTE	111p.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*English; Foreign Countries; *Grammar; Grammatical Acceptability; Higher Education; Language Usage; *Modern Languages
IDENTIFIERS	*English (British); Grammatical Categories; Meaning Conditions

ABSTRACT

Intended for university students and scholars with an interest in modern English grammar, this book investigates problems which have all been widely debated. The discussion, based on British rather than American English, is kept as non-technical as possible, and apart from ordinary grammatical terminology no previous knowledge is required. The book discusses the relationship between a grammatical and a semantic description of language. It is divided into the following chapters: (1) Grammar and Meaning; (2) Countability; (3) Number; (4) Aspect; (5) Time and Tense; and (6) The Use of the English Tenses. (MG)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED322537

PUBLICATIONS ON ENGLISH THEMES VOL 14

Bent Conrad
and
Steen Schousboe

Meaning and English grammar

CS212487

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Bent Conrad
Steen Schousboe

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Department of English University of Copenhagen 1989

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Publications On English Themes

POET - Publications On English Themes - er en skriftserie fra Engelsk Institut, Københavns Universitet, hvori optages publikationsværdige bidrag om anglistiske emner fra personer med tilknytning til Instituttet. Der optages såvel dansk- som engelsksprogede bidrag.

POET- Publications On English Themes - has the aim of publishing articles and monographs in Danish and English on themes relating to English studies, and written by staff or students of the Department of English, Copenhagen University. POET may also occasionally feature contributions by authors outside the department.

Vol. 1. H.E. Andersen: Sproghistorisk kommentar til 'The Battle of Maldon', l. 162-197. 1985. Udsolgt.

Vol. 2. Steen Schousboe: Om aspekt, med særligt henblik på skellet mellem de simple og udvidede verbalformer i moderne engelsk. 1986.

Vol 3. Christian Koch og Eva Hartby: Bibliografi over publikationer fra Engelsk Institut, 1976 - 1983. 1986. Udsolgt.

Vol. 4. H. Moltke: Nykonservative tendenser i U.S.A. og Storbritannien i 1970'erne og 1980'erne. 1986. Udsolgt.

Vol. 5. 6 symposieforelæsninger. 1987.

Vol. 6. Eva Hartby: MAN-figures in Much Ado about Nothing. 1988.

Vol. 7. Renée Humle og Birte Kristensen: Datamatstøttet fremmedsprogsundervisning - med henblik på det kommunikative aspekt. 1988.

CONTINUED

VOL. 14

poet publications English

Meaning and English grammar

by

Bent Conrad & Steen Schousboe

Department of English
University of Copenhagen
1989

4

MEANING AND ENGLISH GRAMMAR

BY

BENT CONRAD & STEEN SCHOUSBOE

PUBLICATIONS ON ENGLISH THEMES

Editor

Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen and Jørgen Erik Nielsen

Copyright: Bent Conrad, Steen Schousboe and The English Department 1989

ISBN 87-88648-13-3
ISSN 0902-4581

Printed in Denmark, by
Reproafdelingen
Det humanistiske Fakultet
Københavns Universitet

Contents

Author's note 6

Preface 7

Chapter 1, Grammar and meaning 9

Chapter 2, Countability 17

Chapter 3, Number 27

Chapter 4, Aspect 49

Chapter 5, Time and tense 69

Chapter 6, The use of the English tenses 91

References 107

Index 115

Author's note

Bent Conrad died before this book was finished. Some of the chapters are based on his well-nigh finished drafts, others had not even been sketched out at the time. The responsibility for the final version therefore lies with me, but I would like to say here that the book would have been unthinkable without Bent Conrad's work and inspiration.

I take the opportunity to express my gratitude to Professor Henning Andersen, now of Buffalo University, New York State, and Professor Holger Steen Sørensen, of Copenhagen University, for their helpful criticism of parts of the manuscript.

Steen Schousboe

Preface

This book is intended for people with an interest in Modern English grammar. We hope that university students and scholars will find it useful, and we have endeavoured to meet the demands of the general reader. The discussion is kept as non-technical as possible, and apart from ordinary grammatical terminology no previous knowledge is required.

The problems investigated in this book have all been widely debated, and there is no lack of conflicting explanations and theories. We have no illusions that the descriptions offered here will be universally agreed to, but we hope that the book will reward its readers with some understanding and inspiration.

Our discussion is based on British rather than American English. There are not very many grammatical differences between these two varieties of English, at least in what we may call their formal registers. However, it may be pointed out in advance that American readers will be puzzled by some examples of the type exemplified in Chelsea have beaten Ipswich and My family agree in Chapter 3, and that the dividing line between the simple past and the present perfect is not the same in colloquial American as it is in British English. Sitting down to dinner, an American mother might ask her son "Did you wash your hands?", where a British mother would probably say "Have you washed your hands?". In Chapter 6 then, among other things, we try to explain how the line between the two expressions is drawn in British English.

CHAPTER 1

GRAMMAR AND MEANING

§1 The relationship between grammar and meaning, or, more precisely, between a grammatical and a semantic description of language, has often been discussed. The basic question may be formulated as follows: To what extent is it justifiable, or necessary, to include semantic considerations in the grammatical description of a language?

Needless to say, answers to this question vary according to time and tradition. By and large, European traditional grammar did not hesitate to include semantic information where it was felt to be useful, and it is this practice which has given 'notional' grammar its name. Notional grammar holds the view that grammatical distinctions reflect or express semantic distinctions, and this stand, frequently implicit in traditional grammar, has been formulated explicitly many times, notably by Jespersen, e.g. Jespersen (1924).

In a somewhat different form the same view was shared by the European school of structuralism, from Saussure to Hjelmslev. A structuralist formulation of this view may be as follows:

> "Linguistics is the study of signs, linguistic signs, and since meaning is one of the defining characteristics of a sign - because the existence of a meaning is a necessary condition for the existence of a sign - it seems to me that repudiation of meanings amounts to repudiation of linguistics, and it seems to me, for the same reason, that linguistics can never be more exact than our knowledge of meanings allows it to be."
>
> (Sørensen, 1967, 1876 ff)

In this view, then, it is a necessary part of the grammatical description of a language to explain what a speaker expresses when he or she chooses a present-tense form rather than a preterite, to give but one example. This view, or variations of it, can be traced without difficulty in many contemporary writers, in semantics, notably Lyons (1977), as well as in grammar.

In American linguistics the role of meaning in the grammatical description has been much more controversial. Many American structuralists and adherents of later 'formal' kinds of grammar, transformational grammar, Montague grammar, and

the like, exclude semantic considerations as far as possible from grammar proper. This position has not been without its problems. For example, the relationship between meaning and the 'deep structure' of transformational grammar was a moot point for years, but it may be said that for the greater part of this century, the view that grammar could be described adequately without resorting to semantics was widely held among American linguists. However, it must be noted that even in the heydays of transformational grammar this assumption was sometimes challenged, see e.g. Fillmore (1968) and Chafe (1970).

The present book is placed squarely within the notional tradition. Our aim is to examine some grammatical categories of Modern English in order to explain their meaning. But before we do that, it will be necessary to say something about grammatical categories and meaning separately.

§2 Grammatical categories, or secondary categories as they are sometimes called, the word-classes being regarded as 'primary categories', are categories like countability, number, tense and aspect. Probably no grammatical category is universal in the sense that it is found in all existing languages. Therefore, it is part of the grammatical description of a given language, e.g. Modern English, to establish what grammatical categories are found in that particular language, and this is done by investigating contrasting forms, contrast being the crucial notion in the function of grammatical categories. For a detailed discussion of the notion of contrast we refer the reader to Bache (1985). For our present purpose, a few remarks will suffice:

A grammatical category may be defined as a set of mutually contrasting, or exclusive, forms. Each form is a member of the category in question, and it is the principle of mutual contrast, or incompatibility, which enables us to establish the number of grammatical categories, and the number of members in each category. Thus, in Modern English, the singular form of a noun phrase is in contrast to the plural form, which is to say that the category of number has two members. On the other hand, both the singular and the plural forms may

occur with definite as well as indefinite determiners, and this distributional fact is sufficient proof that the category of number is distinct from the category of definiteness. Similarly, the past form of a finite verb like **walked** is chosen by the speaker to the exclusion of a present-tense form, but not to the exclusion of, say, a progressive form, since **was walking** exhibits both the features 'past' and 'progressive'. In other words, tense and aspect are separate categories in Modern English.

It should perhaps be added that since contrast is a defining characteristic of grammatical categories, it is logically necessary that each category has at least two members. In Old English there was a category of gender similar to what is found in Modern German. This category had three members, masculine, feminine, and neuter, so that the Old English equivalent of **this** would have a different form before each gender. In the course of time this gender distinction was lost, so that we now have only one form: **this boy**, **this hand**, etc. However, this is not to say that the category of gender has gone from three members to one since the days of Old English. It simply would not make sense to say that in Modern English the category of gender has only one member. The only sensible conclusion to be drawn from the distributional facts mentioned above is that Modern English does not have a category of gender.

§3 We will conclude these general remarks about grammatical categories with a brief look at the distinction between marked and unmarked members of a category. It would be natural to assume that if a category consisting of two members expressed a distinction within a semantic notion, say, the notion of number, then one member of the category (the singular) would cover one part of that notion, say <u>one entity</u> and the other (the plural) would cover the remainder, i.e. <u>more than one entity</u>. However, as will appear from the discussion in Chapter 3, such a formulation would be an oversimplification of the facts of Modern English usage. Among other things, the singular is used generically in sentences like **The tiger is a**

mammal, where the singular form **the tiger** does not refer to one individual tiger, but rather to the whole class of tigers.

The plural form, on the other hand, does refer to more than one entity. It cuts off, as it were, one section of the semantic range, excluding the other possibilities. This is what is known as privative meaning. The marked member of the category, the plural in the above example, has a more restricted, and hence more precise meaning than the unmarked member. For additional discussion of the distinction marked/unmarked we refer the reader to Hjelmslev (1941), Joos (1964), Lyons (1977), and Bache (1985).

§4 It will be useful to discuss briefly another notion which is important in grammar as well as in semantics, the notion of **deixis**. Deictic expressions are expressions which cannot be interpreted out of context, i.e. without knowing the speech event in which they occur. An expression like **a man** may be understood by any speaker of English, and dictionaries offer a definition, or at least a list of defining characteristics like **male**, **human**, **adult**, etc. but an expression like **this man** cannot be so defined. There is no context-free definition of **this**.

The reason is, of course, that the reference of expressions like **this man** changes with each occurrence of the expression. By means of **this man** we may refer to Mr Jones or Mr Adams or any other man as the need arises. Similarly with words like **I**, **now**, and **here**. **I** does not mean 'the speaker', as some dictionaries would have us believe, since **The speaker is an idiot** certainly does not mean the same as **I am an idiot**. Rather, whenever **I** is used, it refers to the person using it, the person uttering this particular instance or occurrence of the word **I**. In the same way, **here** refers to the place of the utterance in which each particular instance of **here** occurs, and **now** refers to the time of the utterance in which it occurs.

This peculiarity of deictic expressions, their changing reference, made Jespersen call them **shifters**. In the grammar of Modern English, deixis plays an important part in the description of personal pronouns, definiteness, and tense.

§5 Finally, it is necessary to say a few words about meaning. In the European structuralist tradition, the basic semantic concept is undoubtedly denotation, and there is a vast literature concerned with the analysis of that notion. Briefly, the stand of the structuralists may be summed up in the following way: To know the meaning of a sign - a morpheme, a word, or a larger linguistic unit, e.g. a sentence - is to know the conditions that something must satisfy in order to be denoted by that sign, or correctly, i.e. according to established usage, namable by that sign, cf. Sørensen (1967).

Thus, to know the meaning of **man** is to know what entities **man** may be used about, and to know the meaning of a sentence like **Snow is white** is to know how the facts of the world would have to be in order that this sentence would be a true description of them, cf. Tarski (1944).

This kind of semantics is known as **truth-conditional semantics**, and it is a moot point whether truth-conditional semantics is broad enough in scope to explain the semantic distinctions found in ordinary language. For one thing, it is possible to argue that there are linguistic signs which have reference, i.e. which a speaker may use to refer to objects of the world, without having meaning in the above sense, i.e. denotational conditions. Conjunctions, deictic expressions and proper names seem to function in this way, and if they do, then it must be considered a serious blow to the structuralist conception of signs, cf. Conrad (1985).

More importantly, most linguists today probably agree that pragmatics, the study of language in context, is necessary to account for phenomena like deixis, presuppositions, speech acts, and reference. A context-free explanation of these and related phenomena seems at best to be very complicated, see further Lyons (1977). For our present purpose it is enough to say that we take a broad view of meaning in this book. If a semantic difference between grammatical forms is statable in

truth-conditional terms, then we do so. If a pragmatic description seems preferable, then we offer one. Needless to say, there are cases where both views may offer useful insights, and in any case it must be borne in mind that it is hardly possible to draw the dividing line between truth-conditional semantics and pragmatics in a convincing and exhaustive manner at the present time.

CHAPTER 2

COUNTABILITY

§1 The notion of countability is introduced into grammar in order to account for the choice of determiners and the accompanying semantic distinctions in sentences like the following:

(1) I never drink tea
(2) One tea, please
(3) This is a very fine tea
(4) Mary had a lamb
(5) Mary had some lamb
(6) Mary had a little lamb

§2 Traditionally, e.g. in pedagogical grammars (including Quirk et al.) and in The Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the problem of the countability of nouns is solved by means of lexical classification. That is to say that it is assumed that English nouns may be divided into two subclasses, one comprising the countable nouns, **cow, car, child, tree, forest**, etc., and the other the uncountable nouns: **beef, furniture, blood, music, fire-wood**, etc.

After this subdivision, the rules for the use of the determiners are simple: determiners, and other premodifiers, may be subdivided into three groups, one of which is used with countable nouns, e.g. **a(n)**, numerals, **many, few, a few, a great many**; a second group is used with uncountable nouns, e.g. **Ø** + singular (the "empty" determiner as in **Beer is good for you**), **s'm** + singular (the unstressed variant of **some**, as in **Emma drank some beer**), **much, little, a little, a great deal of**; the third group is neutral, in that it may combine freely with countable as well as uncountable nouns, e.g. **the, this, my, John's, any**.

It goes without saying that the classification of the nouns must be supplemented with a rule stating that with many nouns it is possible to recategorize, i.e. even if a noun belongs "naturally" in one class, it may under certain circumstances be treated as if it belonged in the other. **Tea**, for example, is "naturally" an uncountable noun and is treated as

such in (1) above, but it has the possibility of recategorization as a countable noun as illustrated in (2) and (3). Conversely, **lamb** is "naturally" a countable noun as illustrated in (4), but may be recategorized as an uncountable noun as illustrated in (5). Out of context, (6) is ambiguous.

§3 There is hardly any doubt that this way of solving the problem must be said to work in practice, i.e. first and foremost for pedagogical purposes, but from a more theoretical point of view this solution poses considerable difficulties.

To begin with there is the uncertainty of the classifying procedure which assigns the nouns to the class where they belong "naturally". From an intuitive language user's point of view there is no doubt that **lamb** is a countable noun which may be recategorized as uncountable. The opposite possibility appears quite unreasonable. This intuition is undoubtedly due to the fact that the existence of live lambs is a necessary condition for the existence of, say, roast lamb or Irish stew. Conversely, **tea** is "naturally" an uncountable noun because the existence of tea in general is a prerequisite for the existence of different kinds of tea and cups of tea. But it seems impossible to reduce such culture-dependent intuition to a logically consistent criterion of classification, and even the language user's intuition is not sufficient in all cases. For example, it is not at all clear whether **cheese**, **cake**, or **stone** are "naturally" countable or uncountable.

When grammarians speak of recategorization they often say that a given noun has a "normal" use and a more "special" use. This might indicate that the classification is based on a statistical difference in frequency. However, this is certainly not the case. For a statistical survey - if there was one, which as far as we know there is not - would not yield information which is relevant to the structure of English, but would only reflect certain extra-linguistic facts: a farmer would probably use **lamb** as a countable noun far more often than as an uncountable; with a chef or a waiter the re-

verse would probably be true. But this would hardly make us assume that the language of the farmer and of the chef are structured differently.

§4 It is important to realize that the traditional theory stands or falls with the possibility of finding a valid criterion of classification. If not all - or at least most - nouns clearly belong in one of the two subclasses, then the theory of classification becomes meaningless. If we give up the classification of nouns according to their "nature", and simply say that **lamb** may occur in countable as well as uncountable uses, and similarly with **tea** and **cheese** etc., then we have an entirely different theory which cannot explain the choice of determiner as a question of automatic selection or rection.

The point is that it is not only a few selected nouns which show this double nature. Most nouns have quite natural uses in both constructions, and if we make a distinction between what is grammatically possible or acceptable and what is possible or acceptable for biological, cultural, legal, etc. reasons we shall find that many of the apparent restrictions on the free use of nouns as both countable and uncountable are in fact not linguistic, i.e. grammatical or semantic restrictions. For example, it is not the grammar of English which prevents expressions like

(7) I like boy better than girl
(8) Could I have a blood, please

From a strictly linguistic point of view there is nothing to prevent a cannibal from saying (7), and (8) would be quite natural for a guest in the vampires' own bar in Transsilvania. To be specific: (7) and (8) are certainly not ungrammatical. What is unusual about them is that in our society there are very few situations - if any - where they would be uttered.

Allen (1966) gives the rule that nouns designating entities consisting of the same material throughout can be countable as well as uncountable, e.g. **(a) cheese, (a) cake, (a) brick,** while nouns designating entities consisting of different materials can only be countable, e.g. **a car** or **a pencil.** A pencil is not made of a certain kind of "pencil-matter", but consists of paint, wood and graphite. Such facts are probably not irrelevant, but they are not crucial either and they certainly do not constitute a rule. A lamb does not consist of homogeneous "lamb-matter", but of wool, fat, meat, bones, etc.; yet **lamb** may be used as an uncountable noun. When a word like **pencil** is not used as an uncountable noun, this is due not so much to the construction of the pencil as to the fact that we have no standard use for ground or grated pencil. It is quite predictable that if anybody does have a use for ground pencil, then the English language will freely allow expressions like

(9) Would you hand me some pencil, please

§5 The following two facts are of particular interest:
1) For practically every noun **x**, whether this noun is otherwise countable or uncountable, there is a countable use, **an x** = a kind of x, cf. for example **a sheep** = a kind or breed or species of sheep, **a mutton** = a kind of mutton, **a whisky** = a brand of whisky. There are a few exceptions to this general rule: a kind of furniture can hardly be called a **furniture.**
2) All nouns, including the countables, may be used in expressions like **a kind** (**type, species,** etc.) **of x.** In this expression, **x** is used as an uncountable noun, and here we may also find nouns which for special reasons do not otherwise occur as uncountables, e.g. **loaf** and **sheep,** which normally correspond to the uncountable **bread** and **mutton.**

For these reasons, then, we will say that practically all English nouns have countable as well as uncountable uses. In view of this, it is clearly unsatisfactory simply to classify the English nouns as either countable or uncountable. If they are to be subdivided at all, they must be divided into one

class which is "naturally" countable, and another which is "naturally" uncountable. But as we saw above there is no valid criterion of "naturalness".

A further complication is that recategorization as described by traditional grammars can hardly be said to conform to the methodological assumptions on which modern linguistics is based. Within a formal type of linguistics, i.e. one which is based on distribution, it does not make sense to say that e.g. **lamb** is a countable noun which may be used as if it were uncountable. If a word is used as if it were uncountable, i.e. in contexts where uncountable nouns are used, then it is an uncountable noun. For the grammatical classification of a word depends largely if not exclusively on the contexts in which it may occur. If the distributional facts are taken into consideration, the result therefore becomes in reality a doubling of the number of English nouns: each countable noun receives a homonymous uncountable twin, and vice versa.

For these reasons it seems inevitable to abandon the attempts to solve the problem of countability by means of a classification of the nouns.

§6 An alternative description may take the premodifiers listed above (§2) as a point of departure. These show an unquestionable difference with regard to countability. Therefore, instead of regarding the nouns as either countable or uncountable, we may regard them as neutral with respect to countability, the premodifiers being the expressions of either countability or uncountability.

In this view, then, the noun itself - **cheese** to take only one example - is neither countable nor uncountable; but when the noun is used in connection with a premodifier in an utterance, the joint expression will thereby receive an element of countability or uncountability, cf.

(10) Emma was eating a cheese
(11) Emma was eating cheese

where the indefinite article in (10) shows that the object is countable, while the Ø-determiner in (11) shows that the object is here uncountable. If we use a premodifier from the third group, e.g.

(12) Emma was eating the cheese

then we cannot in the absence of a context decide whether (12) is a definite version of (10) or (11). But if (12) occurs in a natural context it will in principle be possible to determine the question; at any rate there is no doubt that (12) is a definite form of either (10) or (11). In other words, we may regard (12) not as neutral with respect to countability, but as ambiguous. (In the same way as **I let her do it** is not neutral with respect to tense, but ambiguous. In an actual context it is in principle possible to decide whether it is present or past.).

§7 The result of these considerations, then, is that all nouns are neutral with respect to countability, whereas all noun phrases in actual utterances are either countable or uncountable, and frequently marked unambiguously as one or the other.

It will be seen that in this way the category of countability is relocalized; from being a category which traditionally characterizes nouns it now becomes a category characterizing noun phrases. A natural way to explain the alternation between, say, **cheese** and **a cheese** will be to assume that the noun phrase is inflected for countability.

The semantic notion which is expressed by this grammatical category is the following: If the speaker chooses an uncountable form of the noun phrase, then he refers to a quantity which is only defined by general characteristics of kind, type, species, etc. This quantity is referred to as unlimited if the determiner is **all** or **Ø**, whereas it is limited if the

determiner is **a'm, much, a little**, e.g. **cheese, much cheese.** When the countable form is chosen, the noun phrase refers to, or denotes, entities which apart from the general characteristics also have more specific features. If for example **a cheese** means "a kind of cheese", then it denotes cheese which is characterized by at least one extra property in addition to the general characteristics of cheese, and this is the normal way in which a class is divided into subclasses. If **a cheese** refers to a discrete portion of cheese, such as it appears when it leaves the dairy, then the referent has certain individual accidental properties, e.g. that of being located at a certain place at a certain time. The common hallmark of the countable uses is of course that the referent is associated with number (of types, kinds, species etc. or of individuals.).

§8 In this situation where we have a choice between a countable form and an uncountable form of the noun phrase, the same conditions prevail as with all other linguistic choices. The speaker can only choose between the possibilities which the language offers. The speaker is not free to make a semantic choice on the basis of his or her language-independent knowledge of the surrounding world. For example, English does not allow the speaker to refer to the fixtures of a room as a number of individual "furnitures" or to the contents of a fruit bowl as a number of individual fruits. Conversely, we cannot choose to refer to the contents of a tool box as an unspecified mass or quantum; they must be referred to as a number of individual tools. What happens is that we select an utterance which is linguistically possible and know what it implies to utter it.

This means that even if we link countability to the noun phrase as an inflectional category, the grammatical description cannot ignore the idiosyncratic properties of the individual noun. Among these properties are not only purely grammatical restrictions like the ones discussed above, but also a great many individual semantic characteristics. For a detailed discussion of the grammatical properties of nouns we

refer the reader to Allan (1980), who establishes eight different subclasses of nouns, based on their degree of 'countability preference', i.e. their cooccurrence with certain determiners and pronouns. As for the semantic properties, it is worth pointing out that not all nouns have a semantic distribution as predictable as **cheese**, **cake** and **stone**. A glass jug or a window pane cannot be referred to by **a glass**. **A rubber** cannot be used about every object made of rubber, but only about randomly selected objects such as pencil rubbers, contraceptives and (in the plural) overshoes. Sometimes the semantic situation is even more arbitrary, as in the case of **surgery/a surgery**.

In addition to this arbitrariness there are cases of suppletion, where two morphologically distinct words are used as one set of countable and uncountable forms: **loaf/bread**, **sheep/mutton** and **tree/wood**.

The last difficulty to be listed is the following: As stated above (§5), **an x** can always mean "a kind of x". Frequently, but not always, it can also mean "an individual x". Whether both these interpretations are possible, or only the first one, is determined by the lexicon alone, i.e. by the arbitrary properties of the individual noun. Native speakers of English simply know that **a gold** cannot mean a gold ring, or an object made of gold, in the same way as they know that **an iron**, apart from meaning a kind of iron, means a flat-iron, but not for instance a hammer or a nail.

§9 The alternative description of countability offered above, then, can in no way be said to be smooth or unproblematic. Nevertheless it appears more satisfactory than the traditional description, because it can account for the general regularity which - in spite of the difficulties listed above - underlies the choice between countable and uncountable forms. A great many of the apparent exceptions are not due to linguistic restrictions, but to extra-linguistic facts (**I do not like boy**, etc.), and the marked exceptions, the lexical peculiarities discussed in §8, must be accounted for by all descriptions.

CHAPTER 3

NUMBER

§1 Number is a grammatical category which characterizes noun phrases by accounting for grammatical and semantic contrasts of the kinds which may be illustrated by the following examples:

(1)(a) Emma hated a boy
(b) Emma hated boys
(2)(a) I should like to buy that sheep
(b) I should like to buy those sheep
(3)(a) The Hebrides is a foggy place
(b) The Hebrides are a foggy place
(4)(a) Chelsea has become a fashion centre
(b) Chelsea have beaten Ipswich

The category of number is traditionally described as comprising two members, the singular (illustrated in the (a)-examples above) and the plural (illustrated in the (b)-examples).

The semantic functions expressed by the category can normally be interpreted so that the singular denotes a single referent and the plural a plurality - two or more - of referents. It will be obvious, then, that in order to make use of this contrast, the language user must be able to decide whether he or she is dealing with a single referent or several referents. This in turn means that the singular and the plural with the associations of mathematical number described above are only applicable to entities which are perceived as individual and discrete in relation to other entities. This situation may be illustrated by the use of forms like **one tree - several trees**.

We may note first that these forms - like most expressions of grammatical number - are ambiguous, in that they may be used about individual plants as well as species of trees. In the first interpretation, the plural form - and, by implication, also the singular - presupposes that it is possible to distinguish individual trees from one another, for example by ascertaining that they have independent stems and roots. In the second interpretation, the number expressions presuppose

a mastery of certain botanical criteria enabling the language user to distinguish the species from one another. To sum up: the distinction between one and more than one, i.e. the notion of mathematical (or arithmetical) number, presupposes countability.

We may add that under certain circumstances we find an artificially established form of countability. This is the case with units of measurement like inches, miles, pounds, pints. If we say

(5) The pencil is eight inches long

then this does not presuppose that the pencil consists of eight individual inches which may be kept apart. But these inches are found artificially marked on the inch-rule with which we can measure the pencil. The difference from the normal notion of mathematical number is that the inches cannot be viewed as individuals; the similarity to that notion lies in the presupposition of a criterion (the use of a rule, or scales, or the like) by means of which the number is ascertained.

There is no doubt that in English the grammatical category of number is in principle tied to the notion of mathematical number. But on points of detail there are many inconsistencies. For example, it is only with reference to individual entities or specifiable species that the category of number expresses mathematical number. In generic use this is not the case. Whatever the difference may be between

(6) A whale is a mammal
and
(7) Whales are mammals

it is certainly not the difference between one and more than one. In the discussion below we shall not be dealing with generic expressions.

The greatest problems, however, are posed by the fact that number is one of the obligatory categories of the noun phrase. This means that for purely grammatical reasons every

noun phrase must be either singular or plural, whether it is semantically possible to associate the meaning of the noun phrase with the notion of mathematical number or not.

§2 The first problem to be discussed is one of grammatical identification: How do we decide whether a given noun phrase is singular or plural?

The most obvious answer, of course, is that it depends on the form of the noun. If the noun is e.g. **tree**, **cat** or **kiss**, then we have a singular form; if the noun is **trees**, **cats** or **kisses**, then we have a plural form. However, it will soon become clear that the rule cannot be formulated so simply as to say that if a noun ends in **-(e)s** it is plural, and if it does not it is singular. There are too many irregularities in the English number inflection to make this simple solution satisfactory.

Yet the irregular forms do not constitute a serious problem, and all kinds of grammar have been able to solve it. The American structuralists, e.g. Bloomfield and Harris, solved it in accordance with principles based on their theory of morphemes and allomorphs. According to this theory all the irregular endings can be regarded as allomorphs of the regular **-(e)s**-ending. We shall list a few examples:

Oxen. Here it is sufficient to postulate that **-(e)s** has an allomorph **-en** which is used after **ox**.

Children. Here, too, we find the allomorph **-en**, but there is the additional rule that the root morpheme **child** is realized by the special allomorph **childr-** when it is followed by **-en**.

Cacti may be analysed so that **-i** is regarded as an allomorph of **-(e)s**, and **cact-** as an allomorph of **cactus** to be used before **-i**.

Sheep, when regarded as a plural form, has a zero-allomorph (written **Ø**) of **-(e)s**. This means that despite the fact that **sheep** (singular) and **sheep** (plural) are phonologically identical, they may be interpreted as morphologically distinct, since the plural form in this analysis becomes **sheep + Ø**.

Men may be analysed as consisting of a zero-allomorph of **-(e)s**, and an allomorph **men-** to be used before **-Ø**.

§3 The analysis presented above is based on an unspoken assumption which is not warranted theoretically, namely that there is a one-to-one relation between grammatical functions and morphemes. This assumption would be warranted in an agglutinating language which was designed quite consistently, i.e. true to type. It is doubtful whether such a language exists at all, but it is certain that English is not a language of this ideal type. Therefore, there is no reason to claim that e.g. **-en** and **-(e)s** are variants of the same morpheme. They are obviously two different, but synonymous morphemes. Nor is there any compelling reason to say that **men** consists of **man** + an ending which is an allomorph of **-(e)s**. There is nothing to prevent us from saying that **men** is one morpheme consisting of two grammatical features or components, **man** and **plural**. As stated above, a one-to-one relation between grammatical components and morphemes can only be found in an ideal agglutinating language.

For this reason it is not theoretically erroneous to characterize the English number inflection in the way which traditional grammar has always found it practical to do. In other words, we can simply say that the plural in English is marked by several different endings, some of which are originally Germanic while others are not. Various loan-words have kept their foreign plural endings, so that in Modern English we find endings of Latin, French and Italian origin as well as Greek and Hebrew. In addition, we have cases like **sheep** showing homonymy between the singular and the plural, and cases like **men** where the stem differs phonologically from the singular.

We will conclude that the different phonological shapes of the plural forms do not give rise to serious theoretical problems, although they pose practical problems for the language learner. As long as pairs of nouns fit into a proportional equation like the following

(8) $\frac{\text{cow}}{\text{cows}} = \frac{\text{ox}}{\text{oxen}} = \frac{\text{sheep}}{\text{sheep}} = \frac{\text{cherub}}{\text{cherubim}} = \frac{\text{man}}{\text{men}}$

then each pair consists of a singular and a plural form.

§4 The real problems may be formulated as two questions: 1) How do we ascertain the grammatical number of words which do not fit into the above equation? 2) How do we decide whether or not a pair fits into this equation, i.e. how do we justify the claim that **cow** corresponds to **cows** in the same way as **ox** corresponds to **oxen**?

When we examine words which do not occur in pairs, it is obvious that we cannot ascertain their grammatical number on the basis of their shape. **Athens** must be listed as a singular form despite the fact that it ends in **-s**, and **cattle** must be listed as a plural form despite the lack of any tangible mark of plural. Needless to say, the reason for this is that in linguistic contexts **Athens** behaves like a singular noun while **cattle** behaves like a plural noun.

However, a moment's reflection will show that the syntactic justification just formulated is also valid for the nouns which do occur in pairs. It is not sufficient to register that **ox** has two forms, **ox** and **oxen**. In order to justify a proportional equation with **cow** and **cows** we must also establish that the two forms are in fact a singular and a plural. What the equation claims is - among other things - that **cow** and **cows** are used in different linguistic contexts, and similarly for **ox** and **oxen**; and furthermore that **ox** may be used in the contexts where **cow** is used, but not in the contexts where **cows** is used, while for **oxen** the reverse is the case.

This is to say that while in many cases the inflectional forms of the nouns are distinctive marks of the singular and plural, syntactic facts must nevertheless be considered the

primary criterion. Partly because there are cases where morphological markings are lacking, and partly because morphological markings presuppose a distributional analysis in order to be recognized as markers of number rather than of something else.

§5 As the basis for a syntactic, i.e. distributional characterization of the singular and plural we may arbitrarily choose **cow** and **cows**: **cow** is singular, and all words or word forms which behave syntactically in the same way as **cow** are also singular; **cows** is plural, and so are all word forms behaving like **cows**. The most important of the syntactic facts which are relevant in this connection is the compatibility with certain groups of premodifiers.

Singular forms like **cow** are characterized by accepting premodifiers like the following:

(9) a(n)
another
one
each
every
either
this
that

Plural forms like **cows** are characterized by allowing premodifiers like the following:

(10) two, three, etc
both
many
(a) few
a good many
these
those

Some premodifiers are neutral with respect to number so that they are compatible with both singular and plural forms:

(11) the
no
some
any
which
what
my, your, etc.
(adjectives)

This must not be taken to mean that every singular noun is necessarily compatible with all the premodifers listed in (9), or that every plural noun is compatible with all the premodifiers in (10). The premodifiers in question are not all equally general in their applicability. Some are used more naturally with certain nouns than others. The number-specific premodifiers which may occur with the greatest number of nouns - perhaps all - are probably **that** and **those**. For practical reasons, therefore, it may be expedient to regard compatibility with **that** as the defining characteristic of the singular, and compatibility with **those** as the defining characteristic of the plural.

§6 The application of this criterion will have as a result that all obvious cases of the singular and plural will be registered as such, cf. examples like

(12) Look at that cow/those cows
(13) Look at that ox/those oxen
(14) Look at that sheep/those sheep
etc.

Also more dubious cases without any clear morphological marking may be assigned a reasonable grammatical number by means of this criterion, cf.

(15) Why did you spend the summer in that awfully hot Athens
(16) Why did you spend the summer in those foggy Hebrides
(17) ?He is always talking about those measles of his
(18) I hate the sight of those police on the roof

§7 There is one complication in the use of premodifiers as a criterion of number, namely that one and the same noun may be combined with several premodifiers at the same time, and these do not necessarily agree with each other, cf. examples like

(19) Every two hours they drink tea
(20) You will have to stay in London for a further two weeks
(21) I lent Emma twelve pounds; I suppose I have lost that twelve pounds

In order to explain such expressions it must be carried in mind how English noun phrases are normally structured syntactically. In a noun phrase like

(22) a charming Elizabethan cottage

the premodifiers are not coordinated, but form a hierarchial structure so that **Elizabethan** modifies **cottage**, **charming** modifies **Elizabethan cottage**, and **a** modifies **charming Elizabethan cottage**. What happens in e.g. (19) above is that **two** shows that **two hours** is plural, while **every** shows that **every two hours** is singular. Thus, there is no direct conflict between the two modifiers for they are not modifiers of the same linguistic unit. Nevertheless, it is a remarkable fact that English grammar permits expressions like (19) - (21).
Expressions like these are also an additional argument for letting grammatical number be defined by premodifiers rather than by morphology. From a morphological point of view both **twelve pounds** and **that twelve pounds** must presumably be regarded as plural. The syntactically based analysis renders

the intuitively satisfactory analysis of **that twelve pounds** that we have a plural notion, twelve pounds, being treated as a unit (= "the amount in question").

Furthermore, these examples make it clear that the category of number must be relocalized. Nouns are not singular or plural, but noun phrases are. Thus it is the noun phrase **twelve pounds** which is plural and the noun phrase **that twelve pounds** which is singular. Needless to say, in cases where the noun phrase consists only of a noun there is no practical conflict between the two analyses.

§8 The singular and plural have other distributional peculiarities in addition to their compatibility with their respective classes of premodifiers. When the noun phrase functions as subject there is the compatibility with two different verb forms, i.e. verbal number concord, cf.

(23) Emma's cow has eaten my cale
(24) Emma's cows have eaten my cale
(25) Emma's sheep has eaten my cale
(26) Emma's sheep have eaten my cale
(27) The police have arrested Emma

There are certain circumstances, however, which make verbal number concord a less reliable criterion of number than the premodifiers. The most important of these is the verbal concord in relation to the so-called collective nouns:

(28) That jury consists of white people only
(29) That jury were horrified
(30) Those juries consist of white people only
(31) Harland and Wolf faces another crisis
(32) Harland and Wolf have fired a few hundred workers
(33) The Hebrides is a nasty place
(34) The Hebrides are covered in fog

In examples like (28) - (34) the form of the verb does not depend on the form of the subject. **That jury** is undoubtedly a singular form, but it may be combined with a plural form of the verb. **The Hebrides** is undoubtedly a plural form, yet it may combine with a singular verb. What determines the form of the verb in these cases is pure semantics. The one decisive point is whether the referent of the subject is regarded as a unity or as a plurality.

Consequently, if a rule of verbal number concord is to account for cases like (28) - (34) it must be formulated as a semantic rule. As a first approximation one might suggest: The verb has singular form if the subject has singular meaning, and plural form if the subject has plural meaning. This formulation covers all normal cases as well, e.g. (23) - 27).

§9 Additional complications are caused by expressions like

(35) Who has done it is unknown

In (35) it hardly makes sense to discuss whether the subject is singular or plural. The subject of (35) is not covered by any definition of number; criteria for the singular or the plural simply cannot be applied to this subject. Another point is that the subject of (35) does not have a referent which may be related to the notion of mathematical number. It is entities, i.e. discrete phenomena, which are regarded as one or more than one, but the subject of (35) does not refer to anything which may be characterized as one entity or several entities. If a general rule of concord is to account for such examples, the rule may be formulated as follows: The verb has plural form if the subject has plural meaning; if the subject does not have plural meaning - either because it has singular meaning or because it has no numerical meaning at all - the singular form of the verb is chosen.

Yet some cases remain which this rule cannot account for, cf.

(36) His riches are enormous
(37) His wealth is enormous

The different verb forms in these two examples cannot be explained by semantic differences in the subject. The grammatical number of the verb must be due to the form of the subject.

On the basis of this discussion we can only draw the conclusion that there is no general rule for the number concord of the verbs. In some cases the verb form is unequivocally determined by the meaning of the subject, in other cases it is equally unambiguously determined by the form of the subject. In the vast majority of cases, of course, there is agreement between the form and the meaning of the subject, and in these cases it cannot be determined whether the form of the verb is attributable to the form or the meaning of the subject. This uncertainty makes it impractical to assign the verbal concord a decisive role as a grammatical criterion of number.

§10 Another possible criterion of the singular and plural is the concord with the personal pronouns **he**, **she**, **it** or **they**. Broadly speaking, however, these are used in accordance with rules similar to those of verbal concord, so that the choice of the pronoun depends partly on the form of the antecedent, i.e. the co-referential linguistic unit which the pronoun replaces, partly on its meaning.

Only in exceptional cases and indirectly can the relative pronouns reveal anything about the number of the antecedent, namely when the antecedent is a collective noun. In this case the use of **who** shows that the speaker refers to the members of the group, company, government etc., while **which** indicates that the speaker refers to the group as a whole, i.e. as one entity. This is easily understood since it is the members of the group who are persons, while the group as a whole is not a person. Therefore, **who** may be said to mark the antecedent as plural, and **which** to mark it as singular.

§11 It is evident that when we apply syntactic criteria in order to establish grammatical number we may find ourselves in a situation where different syntactic criteria contradict each other, and we have already met with such cases. In general, when there is a conflict between morphological and syntactic criteria we shall regard the syntactic criteria as decisive. Similarly, when there is a conflict between different syntactic criteria we must establish a guiding principle to enable us to decide which of them we will regard as crucial.

For this purpose it will be convenient to follow the hierarchy of concord which has been proposed by G.G. Corbett. In the Indo-European languages, and very likely in others as well, there is a certain freedom of choice between grammatical concord and semantic concord, i.e. concord is based either on the form or the meaning of the governing element. This is not only the case with number concord, but also with for example concord of gender. An empirical analysis has shown that we can establish different types of concord according to how compelling the grammatical criteria are, thus:

Attributive elements
Predicate
Relative pronoun
Personal pronoun

The further down we get into the hierarchy, the greater the probability of semantic concord. The higher we get, the greater the probability, or necessity, of grammatical concord. In other words, if semantic concord may occur at a given level in the hierarchy, then it is predictable that it may also occur at a lower level, and if grammatical concord is obligatory at a given level, then it will also be obligatory at a higher level. In order to illustrate this principle we may look at the word **family**. Here the predicate may show grammatical as well as semantic concord, i.e. both **the family is** and **the family are**. It is therefore predictable that we may also have semantic concord when we have co-reference with a personal pronoun, i.e. **they**. If, however, we move upwards in the hierarchy it appears that only grammatical concord is

possible. We may find **this family**, but not ***these family**. This means that the value of concord as a criterion of the grammatical form of an expression diminishes the lower we get in the hierarchy. In case of conflicting criteria, therefore, the greatest importance is to be attached to the criterion which is the highest in the hierarchy. For example, **family** is singular despite the possibility of **are** and **they**, and **twelve pounds** is plural despite expressions like **Twelve pounds is cheap**.

It is interesting to note that although the hierarchy is established on an empirical basis it may be explained by means of a notion of grammatical proximity: Attributive elements are found within the same phrase as the governing word; the predicate does not belong to the same phrase as the subject, but is part of the same predication or nexus, to use Jespersen's term, i.e. minimal sentence or clause or sentence-like structure; the relative pronoun does not belong to the same predication, but it does belong to the same sentence; personal pronouns do not necessarily occur in the same sentence as their antecedents.

§12 So far we have taken it for granted that the category of number comprises two members, viz. singular and plural. A limited number of nouns, however, have two alternative plural forms. This fact has caused Hjelmslev and others to consider the possibility that the English category of number may be said to comprise three members. Let us look at some examples:

(38)

A	B	C
penny	pennies	pence
Englishman	Englishmen	the English
pig	pigs	swine
cloth	cloths	clothes
fish	fishes	fish
duck	ducks	duck
die	dies	dice

The forms in column A are normal singular forms. The B-forms are "individualized" plural forms, i.e. they refer to a number of individual entities of the type denoted by the singular forms. The forms in column C, however, are "collective" forms, i.e. they refer to a plurality of entities with no interest in the individuals.

We do not consider it a very good idea to complicate the category of number in this manner. Various arguments would seem to speak against this tripartite model:

(a) In the discussion so far, we have regarded distribution as the primary criterion of number, and it will easily be seen that according to this criterion the B-forms as well as the C-forms are plurals. Both sets occur with **those**, to take only one example. If the B and C groups are to include the forms listed above, then it does not seem possible to find any distributional characteristics which are peculiar to one group in contrast to the other. The numerals, for example, would seem to be particularly suitable for the nouns in the B-column, but to varying degrees many of the nouns in the C-column may also occur with numerals.

(b) From a semantic point of view, the C-group does not constitute a uniform group. The relation between **pennies** and **pence** may well be said to exemplify the difference between the individualized plural and the collective, but with the other nouns this distinction is not found in the same "pure" form. Typically, we find additional semantic or pragmatic distinctions. For example, **swine** is not only the collective in relation to **pigs**, but also to **hogs**; **clothes** is not simply a collective in relation to **cloths**, it also means something different; **duck** is not only a collective in relation to **ducks**, but also presupposes that the ducks are regarded as game.

(c) It must be realized that such an analysis is binding. If we choose this analysis in examples like those listed in (38), then we must be consistent and carry through the analysis with <u>all</u> English nouns, i.e. also with those which have

only two forms. In all these regular cases we are compelled to postulate an irregularity, since we must assume that they have three forms, two of which - the plural and the collective - happen to be synonymous.

(d) Even when a nour does have three distinct forms, it is not always possible to fit it into the system illustrated in (38). We might, with the same degree of justification, postulate a system like the following:

(39)

A	B	C
catcus	cacti	cactuses
beef	beefs	beeves
fish	fishes	fish (fishes)

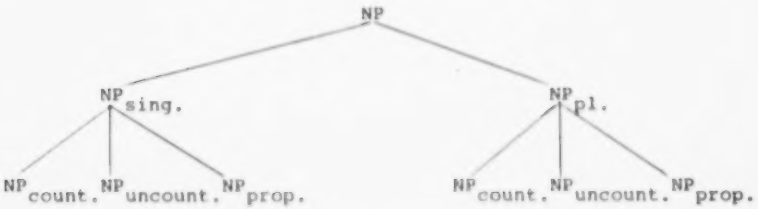
in which B is the plural of kind (species, etc.) and C the individualized plural. If we generalized on the basis of this very limited system as well as that of (38), the result would be that the category of number had four members, and that all regular English nouns would have four forms, three of which would nearly always happen to be identical.

For these reasons, the traditional grammatical treatment of these questions seems to be the most reasonable: The English category of number comprises two members, singular and plural. In certain exceptional cases one singular form corresponds to two different plural forms with idiosyncratic semantic characteristics.

§13 We have yet to discuss the semantic functions of the number forms. The nature of these semantic number problems may be said to depend fairly directly on how the relevant grammatical categories are hierarchised.

Let us look first at a possible hierarchical representation which probably reflects an almost exclusively grammatical point of view:

Fig. 1



If we adopt this model it will be difficult to account for the general meaning of the number forms, since the ordinary mathematical meaning - singular about one kind or one individual - is only valid for the singular and plural of the countable noun phrases.

For this reason, a broader definition of number has been suggested by Hjelmslev and Juul among others. According to this broader definition the mathematical notion of number is only a special case of the more fundamental contrast between the compact (singular) and the discrete (plural). It may be argued that this somewhat more vague definition of the plural may account for some plural proper names, e.g. **The Hebrides**, **The Andes**. These cannot be said to express the normal notion of plural, so that **The Hebrides** means *more than one Hebride, and **The Andes** *more than one Ande, but they may well be said to have a meaning with associations of something individually distinct, discontinuous, discrete, in contrast to proper names in the singular like **Scotland** and **Mount Everest**, which refer to something continuous or compact.

In certain cases this broad notion of plural may also account for some uncountable plural forms like **filings**, **sweepings**, **writings**. Similarly, it may explain the difference between **ash** (= a compact lump of ash, e.g. on a cigar) and **ashes** about the matter in general wherever it is found. In other cases plural forms may at least be said to be <u>compatible</u> with the meaning of the discrete, e.g. **travels**, **riches**, **wages**. The same may be said of the "bifurcated" nouns: **scissors**, **pliers**, **houses**, **jeans**, etc.

§14 The main difficulty of this theory arises in connection with the singular meaning "the compact" as a characterization of uncountable noun phrases in the singular. For example, **water** does not necessarily refer to a continuous, compact quantity of water, but to water wherever it is found. In general, the notion of discreteness may be found with uncountable noun phrases whether they are in the singular or in the plural, and we find it difficult to see the justification of regarding **wealth** as more compact than **riches**, or **wit** as more compact than **wits**.

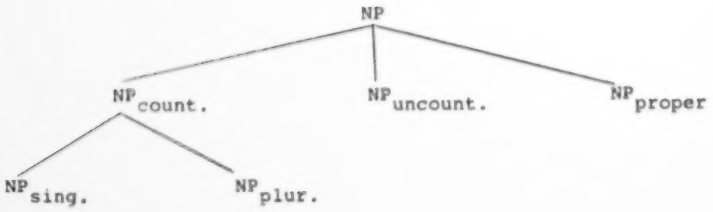
Similarly, the "intensive plural" cannot be explained either by this theory. For example, **the water of the river** and **the waters of the river** are equally compact or equally discrete. The same goes for **the sand of the desert** and **the sands of the desert**.

In fact, the singular meanirg of the compact is found primarily in connection with countable noun phrases, but in order to characterize the meaning of their singular forms we do not need a concept more vague than the usual mathematical one.

We may conclude, then, that compared to the traditional theory of mathematical number, the meanings which Hjelmslev suggested for the members of our category make it easier to explain some geographical proper names, and in addition some sporadic facts with common noun phrases. On the other hand, Hjelmslev's theory cannot explain the use of the singular and plural forms of uncountable noun phrases, and the characterization of the singular (= "continuous, compact") is decidedly wrong in these cases.

§15 Let us now look at an alternative hierarchical representation of the grammatical categories, a model which is better suited to account for the semantic relations involved:

Fig. 2



From a logico-semantic point of view, mathematical number - and by implication the notions of singular and plural - presupposes countability. This preconditional relation is reflected in the model above.

This model, therefore, does not give rise to semantic problems. All countable noun phrases are either singular or plural, and in virtue of this mean either one or more than one. Uncountable noun phrases and proper names are not inflected for number, and in consequence of this fact they are not to be assigned a meaning of either one or more than one. This corresponds to the semantic facts: **air, water, oats, riches** denote neither one single locatable individual entity or several such; their referents are simply not of a kind with which we associate the notion of mathematical number at all. When uncountable noun phrases may occur in two forms, like **travel/travels, wit/wits** and **sand/sands (of the desert)**, then these inflectional forms do not express the contrast between one and more than one, but various unpredictable semantic distinctions. As for the proper names, singular and plural do not, as we have seen, here express one-ness or more-than-one-ness, but rather the compact and the discrete.

The drawback of this model, of course, is that it gives rise to grammatical difficulties. It is a grammatical fact that every uncountable noun phrase and every proper name is either singular or plural. There is simply no grammatical basis for excluding the category of number from uncountable noun phrases and proper names.

§16 For these reasons, we must accept that it is not possible to describe the category of number in such a way that we obtain complete regularity both from a grammatical and a semantic point of view.

In this situation, the most reasonable solution is probably to choose the grammatical regularity and accept a certain degree of semantic irregularity, i.e. to choose the model shown in §13, combined with the semantic facts mentioned in §15. That is to say that we consider every English noun phrase to be either in the singular or in the plural. Countable noun phrases in the singular have the meaning mathematical one-ness, whereas countable noun phrases in the plural express more-than-one-ness. For uncountable noun phrases and proper names, the grammatical number form is in principle arbitrary and unpredictable with respect to these meanings. In practice, of course, the singular form is the norm.

CHAPTER 4

ASPECT

Introduction

§1 Aspect is a category found in a great number of languages side by side with tense. While tense may be said to express the temporal location of the actions, events, states etc. referred to by the predicate, aspect is often said to express the temporal contour of these actions etc. In the Slavonic languages, as well as in many other languages, there are two members of the category, the perfective and the imperfective, and Comrie gives the following general definition of the two aspects:

> Perfectivity indicates the view of a situation as a single whole, without distinction of the various separate phases that make up that situation; while the imperfective pays essential attention to the internal structure of the situation. (Comrie 1976, p. 16)

The above definition, which is admittedly very sketchy, may be illustrated by a syntactic feature of Russian: With telic predicates (for a definition of the term 'telic', see §3) referring to a single action, a present-tense form in the perfective aspect cannot express present time in the strict sense, i.e. cannot refer to an action which is contemporaneous with the moment of speech. In this case, a perfective present automatically refers to future time.

In English we find a similar pattern in the simple and expanded present tenses: **John is catching a shark** presents the action as going on at the moment of speech, and hence not as completed or 'as a whole'. **John catches a shark** presents the action 'as a whole' and, by implication, as not taking place at the moment of speech. The two views are mutually exclusive, or, in the words of A.G. Hatcher: "'Perfective aspect of present activity' would be a contradiction in terms".

It may be argued that 'performative formulae' like **I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth** and **I appoint you as chairman of the committee** invariably occur in the simple present, but this does not invalidate Hatcher's formulation. In such formulae, the speaker does not refer to a present activity, he or she performs an activity. Again, we may quote Hatcher: "The 'activity' predicated has no existence apart from the predication, but is identical with it".

As far as we know, the difference between performing an action in speech and referring to an action in speech was first noticed by Koschmieder (1935). Later, and independently, it was discussed by Austin (1949) and Hatcher (1951). We shall return to the pragmatic inferences of aspect below. For an introduction to the theory of speech acts in general we refer the reader to Austin (1962 and 1963) and Searle (1969).

§2 There is no doubt that the meaning of the two aspects, i.e. the different temporal contours which they express, is influenced by other factors, notably tense and the basic (or lexical) meaning of the predicate. However, in order to arrive at a precise understanding of the aspects as such it is necessary to isolate this particular grammatical distinction from other grammatical and semantic distinctions. Briefly, we will say that while the semantic subclassification of verbs or predicates is 'open-ended', so that each linguist may establish as many subclasses as he thinks proper, the number of aspects in a language is usually not open to quesion. Although modern linguists differ considerably on the definition of the perfective and imperfective aspects in Russian, they agree that these two aspects are the chief ones in Russian. Aspect, like other grammatical categories, is a closed set of mutually contrasting forms.

The semantic subclassification of verbs may be illustrated by the following classes: Durative (verbs referring to actions with perceived duration, like **read** and **live**), momentary, or punctual, (verbs referring to actions without any

perceived duration, like snap and explode), etc. Of the many possible semantic distinctions, two seem particularly important in English, viz. telic/atelic and stative/non-stative.

§3 The terms telic and atelic were coined by H.B. Garey from the Greek word **télos**, meaning performance, consummation, fulfilment. Garey explains the difference thus: Telic verbs denote "an action tending towards a goal", while atelic verbs "do not have to wait for a goal for their realization, but are realized as soon as they began". As a test to find out whether a verb is telic or atelic, Garey suggests the following formula: If one was VERBing, and was interrupted while VERBing, has one VERBed? If the answer is affirmative, then the verb in question is atelic. If the answer is negative, the verb is telic.

It is important to realize that the telic/atelic distinction is not tied to the verb itself, but to the whole predicate. Many verbs may occur in both constructions, cf. **John was smoking** (atelic) and **John was smoking a cigarette** (telic). It might be objected that if John was interrupted while smoking a cigarette, it is still true, in a certain sense, to say that he has smoked a cigarette. Under these circumstances, a natural answer to Garey's question might be "Yes, but he did not finish it", or "Not quite", or the like. Similarly with **Jack was eating an apple**. Therefore, it seems advisable to rephrase the conclusions that may be drawn from the answers to Garey's question in the following way: If the answer is affirmative, then the predicate in question is atelic. If the answer is negative or uncertain, or qualified, then the predicate is telic.

Telic predicates, then, may be defined as predicates referring to actions, activities etc. with a natural culmination or point of completion. Typical examples are

(1) John and Emma were emptying a bottle of whisky
(2) John fell asleep
(3) Emma finished the bottle and sang a song

Atelic predicates refer to actions without a natural culmination or point of completion. Typical instances are

(4) John and Emma lived in Chicago
(5) John hated it, but Emma loved it
(6) Emma sang beautifully

The distinction between stative and non-stative predicates may be drawn as follows: Stative predicates refer to situations which extend in time, and are homogeneous throughout the period of their existence. They are not agent-controlled. Non-stative predicates include all other subclasses: Dynamic situations, which extend in time but are not homogeneous, and momentary situations, which do not extend in time. The first subclass is often called 'processes', the second 'events', e.g. by Lyons (1977). Both subclasses refer to actions which may be agent-controlled or not. Typical instances of stative predicates are

(7) England borders on Scotland
(8) John knows Emma's habits
(9) The bottle contains whisky

The following are typical examples of non-stative predicates:

(10) England beats Scotland
(11) John criticizes Emma's habits
(12) Emma kicks John out

It will be noted that while stative predicates are necessarily atelic, non-stative predicates may be either telic as in (10) and (12) above, or atelic (as in 11).

§4 Two grammatical contrasts have caught the interest of most writers on aspect in English. One is the perfect/non-perfect dichotomy, illustrated by the perfect expressions **Emma has walked**, and **Emma had walked** and the corresponding non-perfects **Emma walks** and **Emma walked**. In our opinion, the distinction between the two sets of forms has to do with location in time, so we shall discuss these forms in the subsequent chapters.

The other contrast is that between the 'simple' and the 'expanded' (or 'progressive') forms, as illustrated by the simple expressions **Emma walks**, **walked**, **has walked** and **had walked**, as opposed to the expanded forms **is walking**, **was walking**, **has been walking** and **had been walking**. The difference between simple and expanded forms cannot be explained by considerations of time. **Emma was walking slowly** may refer to exactly the same action at exactly the same time as **Emma walked slowly**. The difference is rather that the two expressions refer to the action in different ways, which, as we have seen, is a typical function of aspect. Thus, a recent writer says that in English, the use of the simple form indicates that "the situation is viewed as perfective (in its entirety, as a whole)", whereas "with the imperfective (i.e. progressive) form ... the situation is viewed in its middle". (King, 1983, p. 133). In the remaining part of this chapter we shall look at some explanations of the contrast between simple and expanded forms.

Some notional explanations

§5 One of the most influential explanations of the difference between simple and expanded forms is Jespersen's celebrated 'frame-theory', first published in **Philosophy of Grammar**, but modified and enlarged in vol. IV of his **Modern English Grammar**. According to this theory, the expanded form indicates that the action

> ...is thought of as being of relatively longer duration in comparison with some other fact (some happening or state, or simply some period or point of time). If we say **he was (on) hunting**, we mean that the hunting (which may be completed now) had begun, but was not completed at the time mentioned or implied in the sentence, and this element of incompletion (at that time) is very important if we want to understand the expanded tenses, even if it is not equally manifest in all cases. (**Modern English Grammar**, IV; pp. 179)

Typical examples are

(13) He was stirring in his sleep when I entered

where the expanded form indicates simultaneity. The simple form, **he stirred in his sleep when I entered**, would indicate that the stirring took place after the entering. Similarly in

(14) At seven o'clock he walked away

where the walking started at seven o'clock. The corresponding expanded form would indicate that the walking had already started before seven o'clock.

Examples like

(15) Rousseau knows he is talking nonsense

are counter-examples, because the temporal relation between the simple and expanded forms is reversed: The action in the simple form includes the action in the expanded form. Jespersen saw this difficulty, but could not explain it within his theory. It is also doubtful whether

(16) Byron is leading a sober life

can support the frame-theory. Admittedly, the incomplete action of living forms a frame round the 'now' of the utterance, but the same would presumably be true of the simple form.

§6 The theory of 'limited duration' was probably first proposed by Schibsbye, and is now the most widely accepted explanation. It may be found in e.g. Joos, Leech, and Quirk et al. According to this theory, the expanded form indicates that the action is perceived as being of limited duration. In contrast, the simple form indicates that the action is perceived as either having no duration (i.e. momentary) or unlimited duration (i.e. stative). A few examples will illustrate this:

(17) The gun went off

Since the expanded form presupposes duration, (17) would be rare in the expanded form, whereas (18) would be quite normal:

(18) Guns were going off all over the place

When the action is perceived as temporally unlimited it is not compatible with the expanded form. Hence the well-known fact that states are usually referred to in the simple, not the expanded form, cf. (7) - (9) and (15) above. (16), in this theory, would be interpreted as an indication that this way of life was new and not likely to continue.

There is no doubt that the notion of limited duration is often found with the expanded forms, but it is equally certain that in many cases this notion is not due to the expanded form, but to other factors, notably adverbials. Schibsbye's example

(19) We ex-service men have been having a pretty tough time during the last 10 years

undeniably refers to an action of limited duration. The action is said to have started ten years before the moment of speech, and to have continued right up to that moment. But the same would seem to be the case with the simple form (**have had**), and if we remove the adverbial **during the last ten years** there is nothing in the sentence in either the simple or expanded version to preclude the inference that the action continues after the moment of speech. Both versions are equally limited or unlimited.

Although Schibsbye's theory was inspired by the shortcomings of the frame-theory, the two theories need not exclude each other. Thus Leech says:

> The 'temporal frame' effect is not an independent feature of the Progressive form's meaning; it follows, rather, from the notion of 'limited duration'. Whenever a point of time or an event is in a contemporaneous relation with a happening of duration, it is natural that the durational happening should overlap the durationless event or point in both directions - in short, that a 'temporal frame' should be set up. (1971; pp 17 - 18)

Both theories have made important contributions towards an understanding of the difference between simple and expanded forms, but for the reasons mentioned above we do not think that either theory can be regarded as quite satisfactory.

Pragmatic approaches

§7 In recent years there have been several attempts to explain the difference between the simple and expanded forms in pragmatic terms. Briefly, this approach may be summed up in the following way: While traditional grammarians, including those mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, have defined the difference in terms of the different actions, or different ways of perceiving the actions referred to by the predicate, the pragmatic approach explains the difference between the simple and expanded forms as different speech acts performed by the speaker. As far as we know, all pragmatic theories in this area have concentrated on the present tense.

The first pragmatic explanation was proposed by Calver. According to him, the simple present is used when actions, events, states etc. are not mentioned for their own sake, i.e. as mere actions, but because they are indications of what he calls the constitution of things. Typical examples are

(20) Two plus two equals four
(21) The sun rises in the east
(22) He smokes
(23) He plays the violin

According to Calver, (20) expresses a logical, universal (or timeless) relation, (21) expresses order of nature, (22) habitual action and (23) ability. These examples share the common negative characteristic of not referring to individual actions in present time or any other time. They are what is often called general statements. (21) - (23) may be joined in one group which, following Ryle, we will call dispositions. This term is to be taken in its philosophical sense rather than its everyday meaning. Dispositions, in the philosophical sense, express conditional predictability. For example, (22) is equivalent to **He's a smoker** and may be paraphrased as "It is predictable that in certain circumstances he will smoke".

§8 According to Calver, the expanded form never expresses the constitution of things, but "mere occurrence". In other words, while the simple present is used in dispositions, generic statements and the like, the expanded present refers to an individual action without any implication of prediction or pattern or regularity. There is no doubt that Calver overstates his case, and that the simple present may refer to a single action in present time. Hatcher offers many counterexamples like **My back hurts** and **You talk as if nothing had happened**. This error on Calver's part probably springs from the fact that he - alone among the grammarians discussed here - regards the simple present as the marked member of the category, and therefore ascribes a too narrow meaning to it.

If we reverse Calver's marking, in agreement with the traditional view that the expanded form is the marked member of the dichotomy, it will be seen that Calver has made an important discovery: The expanded present may be said to mark the utterance explicitly as a certain kind of speech act which we will call description. The simple present cannot mark an utterance explicitly as a description; it may be used as such, but usually it is used for a long list of other purposes: to advance a hypothesis, to formulate definitions, classifications, logical relations and the like.

§9 With some differences in theory and terminology, the above point was made independently by Goldsmith & Woisetschlaeger and Andersen et al. According to their theories, **The statue stands in the centre of the town** says nothing about the present position of the statue; it may have been stolen or taken away for repair. All that is said is that the centre of the town is where the statue belongs, and hence is usually to be found. The expanded form, on the other hand, states where the statue is to be found at the moment of speech, but says nothing about where it belongs. Here as elsewhere, the expanded form marks the utterance as a description in a rather strict sense which we will now explain briefly. For a more detailed discussion of descriptions, we refer the reader to Toulmin & Baier (1963).

By a description in the strict sense we mean an utterance whose truth-value depends on immediately observable properties. Thus

(24) John is fat

is a strict description. Whether it is true or false depends on certain visual and tactile qualities of John at the moment of speech. In contrast,

(25) John is my neighbour

is not a strict description, because its truth-value does not depend on any immediately observable properties, and therefore cannot be established at the moment of speech. If we change the simple present in (20) - (23) above to the expanded form, we get

(26) Two plus two is equalling four

which sounds strange at first. But under the proper circumstances, i.e. when there are cognizable properties present at the moment of speech, it becomes acceptable: **Look, this calculator seems to be OK now: two plus two is equalling four.**

(27) The sun is rising in the east
(28) He is smoking
(29) He is playing the violin

all depend for their truth-value on immediately cognizable facts or properties, i.e. facts or properties which are present at the moment of speech. They say nothing about habits, dispositions or abilities.

(20) - (23), on the other hand, say nothing about present activity, and therefore their truth-value does not depend on facts or properties which are present in a cognizable way at the moment of speech. Thus (21) may be said (and truly said!) even while the sun is setting. (22) may be said while the subject-referent is sound asleep, etc. What is presentic

about (20) - (23) and similar statements is that their truth-conditions are claimed to be valid over a period which includes the moment of speech. In other words, (22) is true if the subject-referent is now a smoker and this of course implies that the description **He is smoking** will sometimes be true, although not necessarily at the moment of speech.

§10 Hatcher's counterexamples, mentioned in §9 above, illustrate our point that while the simple present does not imply present activity, it is compatible with it. Both **My back aches** and **You talk as if nothing had happened** may refer to an action taking place at the moment of speech, but they may equally well be interpreted as habitual expressions or dispositions. In order to explain the contrast between the simple and expanded forms in the present tense, it is practical to distinguish between the sequential and the non-sequential use of the present tense. This distinction is discussed in the following chapters, so here we will only say that in the sequential use of the present tense, the verbs are used to specify the order of the actions, but not to locate them in time, i.e. relative to the moment of speech. In the non-sequential (deictic) use of the present tense, the verbs specify the temporal location of the actions.

Demonstrations, running commentary and stage directions are typical instances of the sequential present:

(30) I slice the bacon and peel the potatoes
(31) Peter Shilton kicks the ball, and Garry Lineker rushes forward
(32) Pours poison in the sleeper's ear

(30) may be uttered during a television program about cooking, but the point is that it does not function as a description in the strict sense. Rather, it must be interpreted as a recipe, an instruction for use: "Whenever you make this dish, you must first do this and then that".

(31) may be uttered while Peter Shilton is actually kicking the ball, but may also be an instance of the 'historic present'. Again, the emphasis is not on the individual action, but on the order of events.

(32) resembles (30) in that it may be taken as an instruction for use: "Whenever this play is performed, the actions must follow each other in the order prescribed".

In the sequential use of the present tense, the simple form indicates the order in which actions occur: Typically, actions are said to occur in the sequence in which they are mentioned. The expanded form, in this use, does not express sequence, but simultaneity with some point of time or action mentioned in the context, typically the last-mentioned action. This is seen if we add another action to (30) (For non-linguistic reasons, the two actions in (30) could hardly be performed simultaneously): **John is frying the eggs** would then indicate expressly that the frying was simultaneous with the peeling of the potatoes, whereas **John fries the eggs** would normally be interpreted so that the frying took place after the peeling of the potatoes.

§11 In the non-sequential use of the present tense, the difference between the simple and expanded forms may be described in pragmatic terms: While the expanded present marks the utterance as a certain kind of speech act, a description in the sense discussed above, the simple present is used in many different ways. It may be used as a description in the above sense, but it cannot mark the utterance expressly as such. Typically, it expresses other speech acts: Hypotheses, dispositions, definitions, deductions and the like. We will now turn to some of these uses.

The so-called 'parenthetical verbs' usually occur in the simple present. They constitute a very specific use of certain "psychological" verbs like **think**, **hope**, **know**, **feel**, **suppose**. Typical instances are

(33) I think Emma is drunk

where **think** does not describe an activity in the speaker's mind. It is to be taken as a pragmatic marking, i.e. it characterizes the proposition with regard to its reliability,probability, etc. Urmson (1963) notes that semantically as well as syntactically, parenthetical verbs function as sentence modifiers in the same way as adverbials like **probably, no doubt**, etc. Note that they may be moved about as freely as the adverbials: **Emma is drunk, I think** and **Emma, I think, is drunk**.

When these verbs are not used 'parenthetically', both the simple and expanded forms occur, and the difference between them is the usual one. Thus **John is thinking about Emma** is the natural choice when John's behaviour is characterized by certain cognizable properties: absentmindedness, blushing and stammering when Emma is mentioned, etc. **John thinks about Emma** is the natural way to formulate a disposition, or advance a hypothesis to explain John's behaviour. **John knows/is knowing all the answers** is to be interpreted along the same lines.

A similar pattern is found with 'performative' verbs. here, again, the simple present functions as a pragmatic marking:

(34) I admit that you are right

where **I admit** does not refer to a process going on in the speaker's mind. It marks the utterance pragmatically as an admission, rather than a denial, complaint, or whatever. In the expanded form the phrase loses this function:

(35) I'm admitting that you are right

is not an admission, but serves as a description or interpretation of something which has just been said or is being said: "What I'm saying should be taken as an admission". In other words, while **I admit** in (34) does not refer to anything outside the utterance, **I'm admitting** in (35) does.

Summary

§12 The definition of the meaning of the simple and expanded forms is complicated by some lexical peculiarities. As (24) above showed, the simple form of **be** is often used in strict descriptions. We might say that **Emma is being funny** is explicitly marked as a strict decription, whereas **Emma is funny** is only compatible with this interpretation. Still, there is no doubt that **be** and to some extent **have** and some other statives have not yet developed the distinction as sharply as the other verbs. Probably, this peculiarity is connected with their historical development. The expanded forms of these verbs did not occur until quite late in the history of the language, but in the last few centuries they have come to resemble the other verbs more and more. This process is still going on. King (1983) notes examples like **You're not having to pay for it, Is she liking her new car?** and **What's it doing outside? Right now it's being/is cloudy.**

The phrase **to be going to** as in **Emma was going to hit John** is a similar lexical oddity, whose meaning cannot be inferred from the meaning of the other expanded forms. Disregarding these peculiarities, we may sum up the meaning of the simple and expanded forms in the following way:

In the non-sequential use of the present tense, the difference varies somewhat from the other tenses. This is because an action which is said to take place at the moment of speech cannot, by implication, be complete. The difference between the two forms is best described as a pragmatic one: The expanded form marks the utterance as a particular kind of speech act, a description in the strict sense. It indicates that the action is taking place in an immediately cognizable way at the moment of speech. The simple present has a great number of uses, but it cannot mark the utterance explicitly as a description.

States are usually, but not always, referred to in the simple form, since they do not happen in immediately cognizable ways. Typical instances are (7) - (9), (15) and (16) above. The sense of limitation ascribed to (16) we would in-

terpret in Gricean terms: If anybody knew enough about Byron to say that his life-style was generally sober, it would be odd to say that based on certain visual and physical facts, he concluded that Byron was now leading a sober life. In other words, (16) does not commit the speaker to anything outside the situation, whereas **Byron leads a sober life** would; and if the speaker is understood to avoid the stronger commitment, the hearer will suppose that there is a reason for this.

Both the simple and expanded forms occur in 'habitual' expressions with **always** and similar adverbials as in

(36) Emma always drinks whisky
(37) Emma is always drinking whisky

The difference here is essentially the same as with single actions. While (36) is a disposition, (37) is not. What (37) claims is that whenever one sees Emma she is drinking whisky. This claim may be exaggerated (cf. the use of **always**), and it is this exaggeration combined with the lexical meaning of the predicate which gives the expression the negative overtones that many grammarians have noted.

§13 In the sequential use of the present tense and in the other tenses, the difference may be summed up thus:

With telic predicates referring to single actions, the simple form indicates that the action was completed at the point of reference, whereas the expanded form indicates that it was not. To be specific: the expanded form denotes incompletion <u>at that time</u> (Jespersen), and is non-committal with respect to a later completion of the action. Typical examples are (1) and (2) above.

In normal conversation, sentences like (1) and (2) do not occur in isolation. If (1) - (3) above are read together they form a narrative, and it is a characteristic feature of narrative usage that events are related to each other sequentially. In this usage, the difference between the simple and expanded forms of telic predicates may be defined in purely

temporal terms: the expanded form indicates simultaneity with some other action or point of time, whereas the simple form usually indicates that the events occurred in the same order in which they are mentioned. For a more detailed account of the temporal difference between the forms, see Chapter 6.

With telic predicates in 'habitual' use, and with atelic predicates and states, the difference may be less striking, but still discernible:

(38) John smoked/was smoking cigarettes last year
(39) Emma walked/was walking slowly
(40) The bottle contained whisky

In (38) the simple form may be interpreted as a logical deduction based on John's yellow fingers, coughing, full ashtrays and similar kinds of 'indirect' evidence, or as a disposition: It was predictable that whenever John would feel the need to smoke, he would light a cigarette. Both these interpretations are excluded from the expanded form. The third interpretation of (38) is that it is a description based on direct evidence, or, by induction, a characterization based on several descriptions. This interpretation is implied by the expanded form, whereas the simple form is compatible with it.

In (39) the expanded form claims that a single action was taking place in a cognizable way at the point of reference. The simple form is compatible with this interpretation, but it might equally well be interpreted as a disposition.

(40) might also be interpreted as a disposition or the like: "It was a whisky-bottle". However the 'action of containing' seems to be so unrecognizable as to preclude the expanded form even when it might be expected, as in

(41) ?This is a whisky-bottle, but right now it is containing milk

States often occur in non-recognizable ways, as in (7) - (9) above. But if the situation is right, i.e. if the reference is to immediately observable facts and properties, they

may occur in the expanded form, cf. the discussion of (26) above. Thus, an eye-witness reporting on the disintegration of the Earth from outer space might say:

(42) The Alps are exploding, and Switzerland is drifting to the north. In fact, I can see now that Switzerland is bordering on Sweden.

§14 The basic meaning of the expanded form is to indicate that the action referred to by the predicate takes place in an immediately discernible way at the point of reference. This basic meaning exludes the notion of completion as well as actions which do not manifest themselves in cognizable ways, while it lends itself to the notion of simultaneity. The simple form is compatible with the meaning 'action taking place in a cognizable way', but it does not imply that meaning, and usually it means something else.

CHAPTER 5

TIME AND TENSE

Introduction

§1 Like other closed systems, the category of tense serves to subdivide a notional or conceptual field. The notion which is relevant to tense is time, so as an introduction to the following discussion of the relationship between time and tense it might seem necessary to explain what time is.

The notion of time is famous for being one of the most difficult to analyse. Throughout the history of Western philosophy it has been one of the most widely discussed problems, and consequently several attempts at an answer can be found among scientists and philosophers. However, there is not much point in taking up these subtleties here: the native speaker of English does not have to study either the theory of relativity or philosophy in order to learn the proper use of the English tenses.

§2 Even if they may not know what time is, all ordinary naive speakers know enough about the properties of time to be able to handle time relations in practice. We know, for example, that time is forever passing. Admittedly, we sometimes say that "time stood still", but we know that this is only a figure of speech. Time never stands still, it flows continually. Thus, we also know that there can be no 'holes' in time, i.e. intermissions between two points of time which time has skipped over, so to speak. We know that time is unlimited, without beginning or end. It is poetry to say that "time itself must have a stop": rationally, we cannot imagine that time will ever stop passing. It must be possible to ask: "What does the world look like two minutes after time has stopped?". We know that time always passes in one and the same direction. It is possible to go from London to York or from York to London just as one wishes; but while it is possible to move temporally from 1980 to 1986, time cannot pass from 1986 to 1980.

§3 We do not know what time is, and we do not know what it means to say that time passes, but on the basis of the limited knowledge of time which we do have, it is possible to draw a plausible model of it, as a straight line without beginning or end, with no holes in it, and with a fixed direction. Such a model would look like this:

Fig. 1

On such a line it is possible to mark some points, e.g. thus:

Fig. 2

The two points marked above are of widely different kinds. The (presumed) year of the birth of Christ, and similarly the year of the foundation of Rome, the fire of London, etc., is a point chosen arbitrarily on the line of time, equivalent - in spatial dimensions - to the arbitrary choice of Greenwich as the defining point of the longitudes. Starting from this point of time, and using periods of defined length (years, months, etc.) it is possible to specify any event temporally, to place it in time, just as it is possible to specify the location of any event on earth by means of a longitude (and a latitude).

The 'now', however, is not a fixed point, but moves continually with time. But this point too can be used to define events temporally: events take place 'now', took place two days before 'now' (i.e. the day before yesterday), will take place a year after 'now' (i.e. next year), etc. This kind of

temporal specification corresponds to a spatial specification on the basis of the place 'here', e.g. **two miles north of here**, and is called 'deictic' specification.

If the temporal location of 'now' is known in relation to a fixed point of time, e.g. the birth of Christ, then the two kinds of temporal specification, viz. the deictic and the non-deictic, can be converted into each other. If, for example, it is known that 'now' is located in 1986, then it is also known that 1983 may be referred to by means of the expression **three years ago**.

As far as the English tense system is concerned, the point of 'now' is dominant. In the choice of tense forms, temporal specifications of the calendar kind must always be converted so that they are related to the 'now'. This is not only the case for English. Probably no natural language has a tense system which is based on one or more fixed points of time.

Some notional tense systems

§4 Madvig, quoted by Jespersen in his **Philosophy of Grammar**, bases his system on the contrast between present, past and future time. But he adds the extra refinement that in dealing with a certain point in either past, present or future time, events can be defined as either present (i.e. contemporaneous), past (i.e. anterior) or future (i.e. posterior) in relation to that point. To give an example: **Yesterday morning (when the sun was rising, etc.) this and that particular event was present (or past, or future)**. In this manner we obtain 9 possible tenses: present, past and future in the present, and the same three possibilities for the past and the future. In Madvig's opinion, this logically based system corresponds to the flexional system of the Latin verb. The result is shown in a two-dimensional table or diagram, thus:

Fig. 3

	I praesens	II praeteritum	III futurum
in praesenti	scribo	scripsi	scribam
in praeterito	scribebam	scripseram	scripturus eram (fui)
in futuro	scribam	scripsero	scripturus ero

It should perhaps be noted that it is Jespersen, not Madvig, who adds "in praesenti" as a definition of the three forms in the top line, **scribo, scripsi** and **scribam**. We do not think that this is erroneous on Jespersen's part, but see Jensen (1941) for a different opinion.

From a purely logical point of view, there are difficulties with this table in two places: How is it possible to give a precise explanation of the difference between (1) past in the present and (2) present in the past? (1) concerns something which is past from a present point of view, and (2) concerns something which is present from a past point of view. What is the difference? A similar uncertainty is found in relation to future in the present/present in the future. These two possibilities also seem to be logically identical, in the same way as they are identical formally (see below). It cannot be entirely ruled out that a sensible distinction may be drawn, but it cannot be done with Madvig's notional apparatus.

§5 It is interesting to note that a closer inspection of the doubtful places in the table shows that future in the present and present in the future are filled by the same form, **scribam**, which is simply a Latin future form. When Madvig places this form in two slots, this may be regarded as an assertion that **scribam** is two different, but homonymous forms. This is unfortunate, since the same is true for all Latin future forms without exception, i.e. the two meanings are never dis-

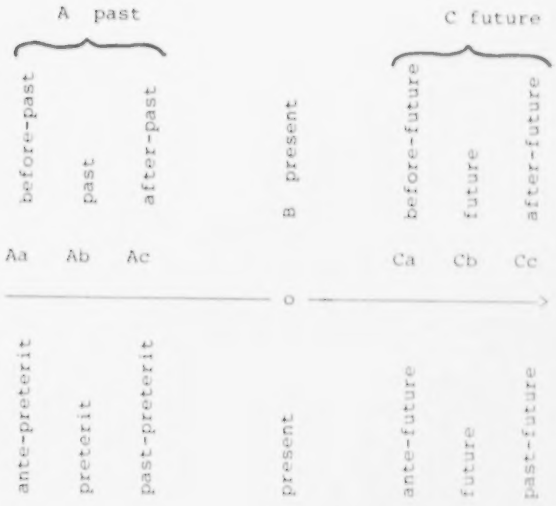
tinguished in form. It is even more unreasonable, of course, if the difference in meaning is imaginary, as seems to be the case. It is theoretically untenable to maintain a distinction between two sets of forms which are systematically homonymous as well as synonymous.

As for the other questionable distinction in the table (past in the present/present in the past), it will be seen that there are in fact two different forms. However, these two forms are hardly to be characterized as done by Madvig. The most reasonable explanation is undoubtedly that the difference between **scribebam** and **scripsi** is one of aspect, not of tense, or perhaps of aspect as well as of tense (Jensen 1941). If this is correct, then both forms should have been placed in both slots in the table, but if the table is changed in this way, then the same criticism applies as above for **scribam**. Thus it appears that Madvig does not really need his doubtful distinctions, since the verb system of Latin does not distinguish formally between the notions which are obscurely defined.

§6 It was considerations like the above which made Jespersen set up the alternative tense system which we find in **Philosophy of Grammar** (see fig. 4).

This diagram of seven 'times' is motivated in the following way: "We thus get a system which avoids Madvig's two serious logical errors, (1) that of a tripartition of 'now', which as a point has no dimensions and cannot be divided, and (2) the even more serious mistake of arranging time in a two-dimensional scheme with three times three compartments. For there can be no doubt that we are obliged (by the essence of time itself, or at any rate by a necessity of our thinking) to figure to ourselves time as something having one dimension only, thus being represented by one straight line." (**Philosophy of Grammar**, p. 256)

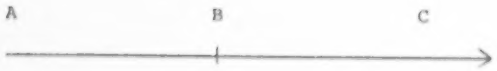
Fig. 4



There are several comments to be made on this. While it is probably true that it is logically erroneous to make a tripartition of the 'now', it does not follow that Madvig made a mistake from a linguistic, semantical point of view. The English deictic element **now** does not necessarily refer to a point of time. The referent may well be a period of time, in fact a period of any length as long as it includes the point of time when **now** is uttered. If **now** is contrasted to the carboniferous age, it may well include a period of several million years. However, this does not mean that now ought to be divided, for there is no doubt that in certain contexts **now** may refer to a point.

Jespersen's second point of criticism should be taken with a pinch of salt as well. He is probably right in saying that time may be perceived logically as he says, but if one really wishes to illustrate this graphically then it can only be done by a very primitive time-line, thus:

Fig. 5



In other words, all time is either past or future, since the present is only the dividing point between these two. The remaining subdivisions which Jespersen makes cannot be compatible with his stated understanding of time: After-past can only mean the future (possibly including the 'now'), and before-past makes no sense at all. There is no time which is earlier than the past, for the past comprises all that time which is before 'now'. Similarly for the subdivisions of the future. In addition, it seems inexplicable why there is a gap in the diagram between the past and 'now', and between 'now' and the future.

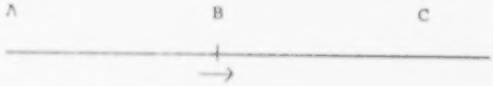
§7 It is probably fair to say that there is a certain conflict between Jespersen's theory and his practice. What he presents in fig. 4 above does not really constitute a strictly logical, semantic analysis of the notion of time. His subdivision of time is affected by the grammatical categories under the time-line. Naturally, this approach is quite justified; but it means that fig. 4 in fact shows that a tense-system of the Indo-European kind does not reflect any physical or logical subdivision of time. As mentioned above, it is not possible to find an absolutely limited period of time which the ante-preterit (i.e. pluperfect) may refer to. (It should be before-past, but of course that is nonsense.) But it is also impossible to find a relatively limited period for this tense to refer to. According to fig. 4, the ante-preterit refers to something in a more remote past than that which the preterit refers to, and this in turn is a more remote past than that to which the post-preterit refers. A tense system which is based on such principles is theoretically possible - and is said to exist in some languages - but

neither the Latin nor the Standard English system is of this kind. Interestingly, Black American English seems to have such a system (Fickett 1972).

It should be noted that in Jespersen's own view there is no room for the English perfect tense in his diagram (fig. 4). This fact alone ought to have made Jespersen suspicious of the value of the diagram.

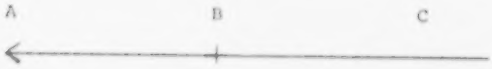
§8 In fig. 5, the arrow shows time to move from the past into the future, but this is by no means the way in which time must necessarily be conceived. Following Koschmieder (1929) we might illustrate time as static, that is as a line with no direction. The movement would then occur in B, the present, which would move along the time-line from left to right, from the past into the future. Time does not move, but we move in time:

Fig. 6



Alternatively, we might argue that the progress of time is such that the future becomes the past, in which case the arrow in fig. 5 ought to be reversed:

Fig. 7



However, whether fig. 5, or fig. 6, or fig. 7 best illustrates our conception of time is not really important. What <u>is</u> important is this: Granted that time is perceived as il-

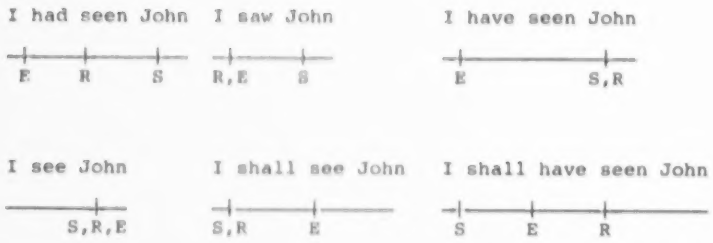
lustrated in one of these figures, and granted that tense forms like the English ones cannot be placed on such a line at different distances from the 'now', it follows that the English tense system does not simply express the distinction between various periods of time. There must be something else which it can also express.

§9 The third notional tense system which we will examine is thought out by the logician Hans Reichenbach. At first glance, Reichenbach's system shows considerable similarity to Madvig's, e.g. in the number of tenses. But Reichenbach's system has certain refinements which make it superior to both Madvig's and Jespersen's.

As with the other two, Reichenbach's starting point is the moment of speech (='now'), i.e. the point of time at which that particular act of speech which contains the tense form takes place. This point is a so-called "point of reference", i.e. a point in relation to which events can be located temporally. There are three possibilities for such a location: An event is either contemporaneous with the point of reference, or earlier, or later. But in addition, new points of reference may be established in relation to the first one. For these, there are two possibilities: they may be placed either before or after the act of speech. New points of reference may be defined explicitly by means of words like **yesterday** (= "the day before the day on which the act of speech takes place") or **tomorrow** (= "the day after the day on which the act of speech takes place"). When these new points of reference have been established, it is further possible to locate events in relation to them, each new point of reference offering the possibility of three positions.

§10 By placing three points, the point of speech (S), the point of reference (R), and the point of the event (E) in relation to each other, it becomes possible for Reichenbach to differentiate all the English tense forms:

Fig. 8



These illustrations are to be understood in the following way: In the pluperfect, e.g. **When I came back, Emma had drunk all the whisky**, all three points are separated from each other. The event referred to, i.e. Emma's emptying the bottle, is located at a point of time which is earlier than another point of time in the past, which in turn serves as the point of reference, i.e. the moment at which I came back. That this point of reference is in the past is shown by its position to the left of the point of speech.

In the past tense, e.g. **Yesterday morning Emma robbed a bank**, the point of reference and the point of the event coincide. In this case, the point of reference is expressed by **yesterday morning**, and the event, Emma's robbing the bank, takes place at the point of time indicated, and this point of time is earlier than the point of speech.

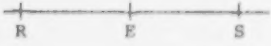
In the present perfect, e.g. **Emma has stolen my whisky**, we see again that two points coincide, but in this case they are the point of speech and the point of reference. In other words, the event is located at a point of time earlier than the point of reference, and the point of reference coincides with the point of speech.

In a similar manner, Reichenbach interprets utterances referring to future time. In Reichenbach's view, the English future tense is ambiguous. One possible interpretation is illustrated in fig. 8; in the other interpretation, R coincides with E. In other words, **I shall see John** expresses either that the event will take place later than a point of refer-

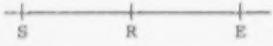
ence which coincides with the point of speech, or that the event will coincide with a point of reference which is later than the point of speech. The two interpretations may be disambiquated by an adverbial; thus either **Now I shall see John** (S,R, - E) or **I shall see John tomorrow** (S - R,E).

The future perfect, e.g. **When you see Emma, she will already have done it**, expresses that the event takes place at a point of time which is prior to a point of reference which in turn is later than the point of speech.

It is noteworthy that some of the theoretical possibilities, e.g.



and



do not seem to have any systematic grammatical expressions in English although such time-relations are certainly possible. The structure R - E - S is found in **I did not expect that he would win**, and in **The king lavished his favour on the man who was to kill him**. The structure S - R - E is exemplified in **I shall be going to see him**. Furthermore, it is in general a moot point whether expressions referring to future time constitute a separate member of the English category of tense (see below).

Time and sequence

§11 Reichenbach's theory of tense invites some additional interpretations which he himself might not accept.

The difference between Madvig's and Jespersen's theories on the one hand and Reichenbach's on the other may be linked to different ways of perceiving time. When grammarians speak explicitly about time they seem to regard it as an entity

existing objectively, whose only known property is its directionality. In contrast, Reichenbach (also) perceives time in the way in which it is actually realized, viz. as various relations between events: two events may take place at the same time, one may precede the other, or they may overlap. It goes without saying that these two ways of regarding time are not mutually exclusive. While it is true that we experience events in their relative order, it is certainly also possible to regard time as an objective, measurable entity. That is what we use calendars and clocks for.

The insight that all English tense forms require three points for their interpretation is what strikes us immediately as a touch of genius in Reichenbach's system. This feature enables Reichenbach to combine the two perceptions of time mentioned above so that they are brought to supplement each other.

A closer inspection of Reichenbach's formulae will show that they contain information of two different kinds. On the one hand there is information about time. This information is supplied by the points of reference, which always have a fixed position in objective time. While it is true that these positions are often deictically defined, it should not be forgotten that deictic time specifications like **now**, **yesterday**, **and two hours ago**, may in principle always be replaced by specifications of the calendar/clock kind. Sometimes the point of reference is not defined explicitly, but in these cases it can be inferred from the context.

On the other hand Reichenbach's formulae contain information about sequence or order. This information is supplied by the position of the point(s) of the event(s) in relation to a point of reference. When the point of the event coincides with the point of reference, the event is thereby located in time. When the point of the event and the point of reference do not coincide, the event is <u>not</u> specified temporally, but only sequentially, i.e. with respect to order.

§12 The above formulation raises two theoretical questions: (1) Is it possible to distinguish notionally between temporal and sequential specification? (2) Does English have one tense system which combines information about time with information about sequence, or are there two distinct, but compatible systems, one dealing with time and the other with sequence?

As for the first question, the difficulty is that one cannot in fact or in logic distinguish between temporal location and sequence. A past point of time is necessarily earlier than 'now', and a future point of time is necessarily later than 'now'. Moreover, an event which takes place earlier than 'now' must necessarily occur at a point of time in the past, and an event which takes place later than 'now' must necessarily occur in the future. Hence it follows that the distinction is superfluous from a logical point view, and it is hardly surprising that this distinction is not made in the language of formal logic. But there is nothing to prevent a natural language from drawing "illogical" distinctions, and it seems that this is what English does when it distinguishes between the preterit (past tense) and the present perfect. Where both forms are possible, they imply each other, and are therefore logically equivalent: **I have done it** implies **I did it**, and **I did it** implies **I have done it**. Since, however, **I have done it** and **I did it** are not synonymous in English, we must draw the conclusion that English distinguishes semantically between the two forms. It is worth noting that the same "superfluous" or "illogical" distinction must be recognized elsewhere in the English language. It is to be found in **last/latest** and, to some extent, in **next/nearest**. In a great many cases **last** and **latest** are logically equivalent without being synonymous.

Incidentally, this raises a theoretical semantical problem. Most semanticists, e.g. Lyons, 1968, define the relation of synonymy as mutual implication, i.e. "if and only if". However, in the above examples and elsewhere in the language it appears that mutual implication does not correspond to what would normally be called synonymy. There is no doubt

that it is possible to distinguish notionally between sequence and temporal location, even if it is not always possible to do so logically.

§13 As for the second question, there is something to be said for a theory of one tense system which expresses both time and sequence, i.e. preterit as well as perfect tenses, and also something to be said for a theory of two systems or categories: a category of tense, marked by the endings **-ed** and **-s/Ø**, and a category which, following Joos, we might call phase, marked by the forms **have -en** and **Ø**. In the latter theory, phase is a category which is different from tense and aspect, but compatible with both these other categories.

One argument in favour of the phase-theory is that it gives the simplest interpretation of a set of forms like

(1) I have done it
(2) I had done it

The simplest way to regard these two forms is to see them as expressing the same difference as (3) and (4):

(3) I have it
(4) I had it

so that (1) is **to have done it** in the present tense, and (2) is the same expression in the past tense. On the other hand, **have - en**, i.e. the combination of the auxililary **have** and the past participle of the main verb, whether regular, as in **walked**, or irregular, as in **done** and **put**, may be regarded as marking a tense form of its own. If this view is taken, then (1) and (2) must be analysed as comprising two tense morphemes, viz. present + perfect and past + perfect respectively, which conflicts with the normal definition of grammatical categories. This difficulty may be avoided if (5) and (6) below are regarded as two phases of the same tense, i.e. the present:

(5) I do it
(6) I have done it

This is far from revolutionary, since Jespersen claimed that the present perfect was not a tense in its own right, but a "retrospective present". However, the introduction of a category of phase is far from unproblematic. When we speak of an event which takes place earlier than 'now' there are two possibilities: the present perfect and the past tense. But when we speak of something which takes place earlier than a point of reference in past time, then there is only one possibility, the past perfect. And this form has uses which correspond to the present perfect as well as the past tense, cf.

(7) I have done it already
(8) *I did it already (see footnote)
(9) I did it two hours ago
(10) *I have done it two hours ago
(11) When I talked to Emma, I had done it already
(12) When I talked to Emma, I had done it two hours earlier

Footnote: (8) above is probably acceptable to most Americans. Our discussion here and elsewhere is based on standard British usage.

This means that the contrast between sequence and time is neutralized in the past perfect (the pluperfect). There are other cases as well which show that the **have**-forms express both sequence and time, e.g.

(13) He must have done it

which means "I am sure he did it" or "I am sure he has done it".

Such cases too are probably best interpreted as instances of neutralization, and neutralization is found among members of the same category. This points to the past tense and the present perfect both being members of the same category, i.e. tense.

The latter argument seems to weigh more heavily. If we introduce a separate category of phase, we are forced to regard **I had done it** and **He must have done it** as ambiguous, because they cannot under these circumstances be neutralizations. This means that each occurrence of **He must have done it** is either past or perfect. We would have an accidental - but consistent - syncretism of two different forms. This is a complication which strikes us as being counterintuitive.

§14 The alternative is to regard **have -en** as one indissoluble marker of the perfect, i.e. not as composed the present + the perfect, and **had -en** as one indissoluble marker of the pluperfect, i.e. not as composed by the past + the perfect. In this way it is possible to achieve a reasonable syntactic and semantic analysis by giving up a morphological simplification. It is worth noting that the result is intuitively satisfactory: The pluperfect is not necessarily the perfect in the past, it can also be the past in the past. In other words, the morphologically obvious analysis of (1) and (2) above is semantically misleading in any case, and may therefore be abandoned without regrets.

For the sake of completeness it should be mentioned that there are proponents of a theory according to which the perfect belongs with a category of aspect. (Notably R. Quirk and other British grammarians). According to this theory **I have lived in London** stands in aspectual contrast to **I live in London** and **I am living in London**. On the other hand, **I have lived in London** does not stand in any immediate contrast to **I lived in London**, since the perfect is an aspect in the present tense according to this theory.

It is difficult to find arguments in support of this theory and easy to find arguments against it. Despite the fact that it is the perfect and the past tense which are in mutual

competition, these two forms cannot be directly juxtaposed, because according to the theory there are two differences between them, one of aspect and one of tense. On the other hand, the perfect may be freely combined with the progressive (**I have been living in London for some time**), though according to the theory the two forms are both members the same category, i.e. aspect. Finally, we find neutralization between the perfect and the past in the pluperfect, though the two forms belong to different categories according to the theory.

To sum up: We find it misleading to use one term ("aspect") for what is clearly two contrasts, viz. the perfect/non-perfect distinction seen in **has walked** vs. **walks** and **had walked** vs. **walked**, and the progressive/non-progressive distinction seen in **is walking** vs. **walks** and **was walking** vs. **walked**. The latter contrast may reasonably be termed aspect, and was dealt with in chapter 4. But if the former is to be regarded as a distinct category then surely it is better to call it by a name of its own, e.g. phase, than to call it by a name which is also used for another category, with which it is compatible.

Predictability and the future tense

§15 One of the traditional problems of English grammar is whether English can be said to have a future tense. If there is such a tense, it will be found in examples like

(14) If John marries Emma, he will regret it
(15) If you ask me, I shall tell you the truth
(16) The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised

Of these possibilities, (16), "prophetic shall", is hardly found in modern English, and it is not too clear to what extent **shall** in (15) is used in modern English, nor is it quite clear whether this **shall** can ever be said to be synonymous with **will** as used in (14). For these reasons, the following

discussion will be centred upon **will** as used in (14), since this must be considered the least doubtful candidate for a possible future tense.

However, there is no doubt that some native speakers, notably in the South of England, automatically replace **will** by **shall** in the first person when **will** has the meaning or function to be discussed below. When **shall** is used in this way, we see a function which cannot be inferred from the normal modal meaning of **shall**. What we have is **shall** as an optional variant of **will**.

When the problem of a future tense is discussed in traditional grammar, it is normally taken for granted that if there are examples where **will** does not denote volition and **shall** does not denote obligation, then **will** and **shall** are markers of a future tense. This is the case in the three examples above, so according to this traditional criterion they are all future tense forms.

However, the question is not so simple. Presumably, traditional grammarians have mingled their reasoning with historical considerations. In Old English, expressions containing **willan** and **sculan** were obviously modal, denoting volition and compulsion respectively. They could not be used automatically to translate a Latin future tense. But from this, it does not follow that **will** and **shall** are future tense markers when they do not express volition or obligation. It is quite possible that they have become expressions of other kinds of modality.

§16 Let us assume that this is indeed the case, and that at least **will** may today express a modality which we might term "predictability". From a strictly notional point of view it is obviously impossible to decide whether reference to something which is predictable will be expressed by means of a certain tense form (the future) or by a modality in the present tense. In other words, it is not a foregone conclusion whether we talk about the future realization of a predictable event, or about the present predictability of a future event. The two possibilities are logico-semantically equivalent and presuppose the same degree of certainty on the speaker's

side. Therefore, when we are to decide whether **will**, and perhaps **shall**, are always modal verbs, or whether they are sometimes tense markers, the decision cannot be based solely on the meaning of the expressions, but must be based primarily on grammatical considerations, i.e. distribution.

It is remarkable that **will** is used in accordance with the same rules and with the same temporal implications as other modal verbs, also when **will** expresses predictability, cf.:

(17) That must be the tower
That will be the tower
(18) John must have gone fishing now
John will have gone fishing now
(19) John must be swimming in the river
John will be swimming in the river
(20) John must come (tomorrow)
John will come (tomorrow)
(21) John must come and see us once a week
John will come and see us once a week

Concerning this material one may note 1) that **will** is used without any change of meaning about present or future actions (or states of affairs), according to the same rules as other modal verbs, and 2) that the future time reference is produced by contextual factors, with **will** as well as with other modal verbs. That is to say that **will**, like the other modal verbs, is in itself non-past, and may refer to present or future time events according to circumstances. If the reference is to a telic action which is brought to its completion, then the meaning of all modal verbs automatically becomes future, cf. (20) above. If the reference is to a repeated action, to a state of affairs, or to a non-completed single action, then a present-time interpretation will be natural, but in principle the expression becomes ambiguous and is most easily disambiguated by means of an adverb of time. The same goes for all other modal verbs. This means that even in cases where **will** is indeed used about something in future time, this is not because **will** means or implies future time, but because a modal verb in that context can only be used about

future events. It seems odd to us that while many grammarians recognize expressions like **It will rain tomorrow** as markers of future tense, no one seems prepared to allow the same status to expressions like **It may rain tomorrow**, **It must rain tomorrow**, etc., although these latter expressions refer to future time as unequivocally as does **It will rain tomorrow**.

The simplest solution, therefore, is to say that in examples like the ones quoted, **will** expresses the modality "predictability". The alternative would be to claim that **will** sometimes expresses the modality "present predictability" (as in example (17)), and sometimes "future time" (e.g. example (20)). The modality "present predictability" would be unique for the very reason that it was present and only that. The other modalities (necessity, possibility, etc.) always refer to either present time or future time.

In addition, it may be noted that **will** does not really refer to a future action simply as a fact. It has an association of "conditional predictability". See Perkins (1983) for a more detailed analysis of **will** as a modal expression.

CHAPTER 6

THE USE OF THE ENGLISH TENSES

§1 In the preceding chapter we saw that the English tense system expresses two different time-relations, viz. location in time and sequence or order of events, actions, states, etc. Location in time may be expressed either deictically, i.e. ultimately defined by the moment of speech, the 'now' of the utterance, or non-deictically, by means of an 'absolute' time indication of the calendar/clock kind. We noted that the two ways of specifying events temporally may be freely converted into each other. (See §3 in the preceding chapter).

Sequence or order of events is not in itself either deictic or non-deictic. One action may be defined as being prior to another, or to a point of reference, which in turn may be specified either deictically or non-deictically. It is characteristic for the English tense system that it often combines information about temporal location with information about sequence within the same predicate.

In this chapter we shall examine how this is done by the four English tenses: the present (**Emma walks**); the past, or preterit (**Emma walked**); the perfect, or present perfect (**Emma has walked**); and the pluperfect, or past perfect (**Emma had walked**). The same four tenses are found in 'progressive' forms (**Emma is walking**, etc.), and in a a couple of places we shall have occasion to comment on some minor temporal differences between the progressive and the simple forms, although the main difference between the two sets is, as we saw in Chapter 4, one of aspect, not of tense. Since the present tense has the widest range of meanings among the English tenses we shall reverse the usual order of presentation and discuss the other tenses first.

The past tense

§2 As a general rule, the past tense is used when an action, a state of affairs, etc., is referred to as taking place at a known point of time in the past or wihtin a known period of

time in the past. If such a point or period of time has not been specified in the context, the past tense requires a specification in the sentence in question. It is possible to begin a text or a conversation with expressions like the following:

(1) When I was in Australia I caught a white shark
(2) Last year I caught a white shark
(3) In Australia I caught a white shark

In contrast, one cannot normally begin a conversation with

(4) I caught a white shark

although (4) may of course be used without a linguistic context if the speaker is evidently on his way home from a fishing trip. In that case, (4) is to be interpreted: "On the fishing trip I caught..."

When, as in this example, the event referred to by the predicate is telic, the difference between the simple and the expanded (progressive) forms is unproblematic. Both refer to a specified or specifiable event in past time. The simple past form indicates that the event was carried through to its completion at a point of time or within a period of time in the past, whereas the expanded form indicates that the event (action, state of affairs) was started, but not concluded. A sentence like

(5) I was catching a white shark...

presupposes a point of reference, probably lying between the point of time when the shark took the bait and the point of time when it was hauled inboard. This latter point need never occur, in other words (5) does not imply "I caught a white shark".

§3 Even though simple and expanded past tense forms generally show the same relationship to the general characteristics of the past tense, and even though there is

not normally any difference of tense in the strict sense between them, it is worth noting that sometimes they are related in different ways to points of past time. When past tense forms are used to relate a course of events (a blow-by-blow account) without explicit specifications of time and without any explicit temporal linking of the sentences, i.e. without the use of conjunctions like **when**, **then**, **next**, etc., the difference is that the simple forms each 'establish' a point of time, whereas the expanded forms presuppose that a definite point of time has been established in the context. That is to say that while simple forms typically express that the actions referred to are carried out in the same order in which they are mentioned, the expanded forms express simultaneity with something else, usually with the action which has just been introduced by a simple form, cf.

(6) John woke up at ten o'clock. He got out of bed and walked down the corridor to the kitchen. He opened the door and stopped abruptly. Emma was kissing the milkman. They both looked at John, and Emma began laughing hysterically and the milkman jumped out of the window.

It will be seen that the action referred to by **was kissing** is specified as simultaneous with the one referred to by **stopped**. This is a typical instance of meaning of the expanded form, the presupposition of an already established point of time. The simple forms simply establish their own points of time. The mutual position of these is made clear by the context. They might be simultaneous, but they are not said to be so, and normally they are not. For example, it is unclear whether **jumped** establishes the same point of time as **began**. The two actions are either carried out simultaneously or in sequence.

§4 In examples like (6), the use of the simple forms does not quite correspond to our introductory main rule. If such examples are to be accounted for, a more satisfactory formulation would be: a past tense form refers to a point or per-

iod of time in the past which is specified or specifiable. (It would be possible to set a precise time for each of the actions in (6) above). However, even this formulation is not sufficiently precise.

When the past tense is used to locate actions etc. in time, as in the examples discussed so far, this location is invariably deictic: The action is said to have taken place at a specified or specifiable point of time or within a specified or specifiable period of time before 'now', the moment of speech. But there is an important additional restriction on this location: In order to allow the use of the past tense, the action must be seen as having taken place within a period of past time which does not extend up to the moment of speech. This is why the past tense combines freely with adverbs like **yesterday**, **last year**,etc., but does not allow adverbs like **so far**, **since then**, etc. Confer the following two examples from McCoard (1978):

(7) From last Friday up till now, I have had nothing but problems

(8) *From last Friday up till now, I had nothing but problems

Here we see that although the period of past time is specified, the past tense is nevertheless impossible.

§5 For the sake of completion, it should be mentioned that there is a modal use of the past tense, exemplified in sentences like

(9) If John knew Emma, he would not say that

This use of the past tense form is clearly secondary. Unlike the normal use of the past tense form, the past tense does not here mean that the action etc. takes place at a known

point of time in the past or within a known period in the past. The modal past combines freely with adverbials expressing present time or future time.

In order to bring both uses of the past tense together under one heading, it has been suggested that the meaning of the past tense is to express what is 'distal' or 'remote'. While it is, of course, an interesting fact that English makes this use of the past tense (and similarly of the pluperfect), we do not think that such a broad definition is beneficiary to the discussion of the English category of tense. Rather we should prefer to relegate this usage, which is syntactically well-defined, to the category of mood or modality.

§6 To sum up: when the past tense is used to locate actions in time, i.e. when it is not modal, it denotes that the action took place at a specified or specifiable point of past time, or within a specified or specifiable period of past time which has come to an end before the moment of speech.

The perfect tense

§7 This is the most disputed of the English tenses, and considerations of space only allow a brief sketch of the literature. For a detailed analysis we refer the reader to McCoard (1978).

The explanations put forward may be divided roughly in two groups:

1. The theory of current relevance. (Twaddell, Joos, Palmer and many traditional grammarians.)

This theory postulates that the perfect is used to refer to an action in past time when the action is not mentioned because it is of interest in itself, but because it has present results, consequences, etc. If we say **Emma has read**

Hamlet it is not because we want to state that at some time she worked her way through the play, but because we want to state that she now knows the content of the play.

2. The theory of the indefinite past. (Allen, Diver, Steen Sørensen.)

According to this theory, the perfect denotes an action in the past which is not specified temporally, and cannot be so specified. To say **Emma has read Hamlet** is in this interpretation to postulate that Emma's reading of Hamlet is now an accomplished fact in the words of Steen Sørensen, i.e. an action of the past.

§8 Of these two theories the second one seems to be the most persuasive. A discussion of the first one may be summed up thus: Twaddell claimed that the perfect concerns present consequences, that the past-time action has some connection to the present time. To this, Diver objects that it is possible to say e.g. **My family has lived in this town, but not since 1638**, where it is difficult to see what relation to the present time there might be. Palmer replies that Diver has not understood what "current relevance" is. According to Palmer, the only decisive circumstance is that we are talking about my present family or the present town: "This is shown quite clearly by the fact that if we say **John has lived in this town** then it is quite clear that John is still alive - we are talking about the present-day John; if he were dead we would only be able to say **John lived in this town**".

In this, one must agree with Palmer; but if "current relevance" is to explain the use of the perfect, it must mean more than that. For even if the town and/or John still exist(s), it is possible to say **John lived in this town.** An additional argument against the first theory is the grammaticality of a sentence like **Emma has read Hamlet, but she has forgotten everything about it, and it has had no consequences whatever.**

§9 The strength of the second explanation, the theory of the "indefinite past", is that it sorts out what must be the essential facts in the distribution of the perfect and the past tense, viz.

(10) I have read Hamlet already

(11) *I read Hamlet already

(12) *I have read Hamlet yesterday

(13) I read Hamlet yesterday

In objection to this explanation it might be said that **I have done it today** is precisely as definite as **I did it yesterday**, and that the indefinite character of the point of (past) time may not be sufficient to render a perfect possible, cf:

(14) *Emma has done it on one particular, but unknown morning

Conversely, the specification which accompanies the past tense may be very vague, and hence presumably "indefinite" in the usual sense of the word, in examples like

(15) Once there was a king called Claudius

§10 The explanation offered here, that the perfect is primarily concerned with sequence, and therefore denotes an action which is earlier than something taking place now, is certainly related to the second of the above theories. When the point of reference is 'now', and when an action is said to be earlier than the act of speech, then the action is said to have taken place at some point of time in the past. The "sequential" explanation seems to be able to account for the fact that the perfect is incompatible with past-time specifications, cf. (12) above: If the perfect defines an action as earlier than something else (which then serves as the point

of reference), then of course it is the point of reference which needs specification. (This and that happened earlier than what?) Since the perfect normally implies that the action in question took place earlier than the point of speech, i.e. 'now', only this point of time may be specified, cf. **Now I have read Hamlet.**

Likewise, the fact that the perfect requires that at least some of the entities referred to still exist at the moment of speech may be given a fairly satisfactory explanation within this theory. One cannot say

(16) *Shakespeare has seen Queen Elizabeth at least once

because the historical facts imply that the action referred to is placed in a limited (i.e. concluded) period of past time: if the sentence is true, the action must have taken place between 1564 and 1601 (?). The action is thus placed in objective time, and must therefore be referred to in the past tense:

(17) Shakespeare saw Queen Elizabeth at least once

If, on the other hand, one says

(18) Mr Heath has seen Margaret Thatcher

then the event is not placed within a definite, limited period of time in the past. All that is said is that it took place earlier than 'now', (and of course after both notabilities had been born). In a sentence like

(19) Margaret Thatcher saw/has seen Churchill

both possibilities may be used in a context which shows that the sentence is about Margaret Thatcher. If the sentence is used in a context which deals with Churchill, only the past tense can be used.

§11 When we choose the theory of sequence as our explanation it is primarily because it can account for certain uses which the second theory - in its normal formulation - cannot explain, viz. cases where the perfect does not refer to past time at all, e.g.

(20) When Emma has read Hamlet, she will know that Ophelia was drowned

(21) Anybody who has read Hamlet knows that Ophelia was drowned

Here, the time is future and general time, but the notion of sequence still holds. The same goes for some special contexts, the historical present, directions for use, stage directions and the like, where the notion of sequence seems to be the only possible interpretation. In all those cases, where the perfect does not indicate past time, the past tense is excluded as an alternative.

§12 To sum up: The perfect denotes anteriority. In its simplest form, this is seen in non-finite (and non-deictic) expressions like **to have done it**. In finite constructions, the perfect has a wider deictic range than the past tense: the point of reference may be situated in future or general time, cf. (20) and (21) above. In these cases there is no contrast with the past tense.

When the reference point is the moment of speech, anteriority implies past time, and we thus get a situation where the perfect competes with the past tense. The difference here is that while the past tense places the action at a specified or specifiable point of past time, the perfect does not allow a past-time specification, cf. (10) - (13) above. When the reference is to a period of time, the past tense requires that this period has come to an end before the moment of speech, whereas the perfect requires that it has not, cf. (16) - (19) above.

The pluperfect

§13 Despite being the most composite of the tense forms, the pluperfect, or the past perfect, is one of the simplest to analyse. It is used to refer to an action which took place before a point of reference in past time. There is no distinction between sequence and time:

(22) When I returned from America, Emma had already gone to Paris

cf.:

(23) Emma has already gone to Paris

Here the pluperfect corresponds to a perfect, but in the following examples it corresponds to a past tense:

(24) When I returned from America, Emma had gone to Paris a few days before

cf.:

(25) Emma went to Paris a few days ago

When the temporal relation between two events in past time is expressed explicitly by means of conjunctions, the pluperfect may alternate with the past tense, cf.:

(26) After Emma returned from America she married John

(27) Emma married John before she went to Paris

However, when the pluperfect expresses sequence, i.e. when it corresponds to a perfect, it cannot be replaced by a past tense:

(28) *When I returned, Emma already went to Paris

In 'back-shifted' indirect speech, we find again that the pluperfect may represent a past tense as well as a present perfect in direct speech:

(29) John said that Emma had left

may correspond to **"Emma left"** as well as to **"Emma has left"**, and, of course, to **"Emma had left"**.

§14 To sum up: The pluperfect refers to an action which took place before a point of reference in past time. If the sequence of the two points, i.e. the point of action and the point of reference, has been expressed by a conjunction, the pluperfect may be replaced by a past tense, cf. (26) and (27) above. When there is no 'sequential' conjunction, and the expression of sequence is thus left to the tense form, the pluperfect is the only possibility.

The point of action may be specified or specifiable as with the past tense, or non-specifiable as with the present perfect. In this respect, the difference between the past tense and the present perfect is neutralized in the pluperfect.

The present tense

§15 The present tense has the widest range of meanings among the English tenses. In order to explain its various applications it is convenient to distinguish between two uses which, following Diver (1963), we will call the sequential and the non-sequential use.

The sequential use of the present tense forms is found only in very restricted contexts: the 'historical' (or 'dramatic') present (which is compatible with past-time specifications), stage directions in plays, précis of books, instructions for use, 'running commentary' of demonstrations and sports events, to give some examples. The latter example, the 'running commentary', shows that while the sequential present tense does not imply present time, it is compatible with it.

The sequential present is used in accordance with the rules formulated for the past tense in example (6) above, apart from the fact that present tense forms do not explicitly indicate past time. As an experiment, we may insert present tense forms in the example:

(30) John wakes up at ten o'clock. He gets out of bed and walks down the corridor to the kitchen. He opens the door and stops abruptly. Emma is kissing the milkman. They both look at John, and Emma begins laughing hysterically and the milkman jumps out of the window.

In this form, the example no longer states explicitly that the sequence of events is in past time. But it is equally characteristic for the sequential use of the present tense that it does not in itself express present time either, in the sense that the events are described as simultaneous with the moment of speech. What is expressed is the sequence, the order of the events. The expanded form expresses the simultaneity of the action with something else, i.e. it presupposes a point of time supplied by the context. In typical cases it expresses simultaneity with the last-mentioned action. It is characteristic for the simple form that it does not expressly state simultaneity. Typically, simple forms describe events in the order in which they occur. Simultaneity is possible, but not a reversed order.

§16 The opposite use of the present tense forms is the non-sequential system, in which each tense form is related to the 'now', i.e. is deictically defined. In §6 of the preceding chapter, we saw that 'now' may refer to a point of time as well as to periods of greatly varying length as long as these periods include the moment of speech. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the non-sequential present tense forms have a wide range of temporal meanings.

With telic predicates, the simple present tense rarely refers to present activity:

(31) John smokes a pipe

will usually be interpreted as a general statement: Whenever John smokes, he smokes a pipe. In this case the present tense implies that the generalization is true at the moment of speech. There is no reference to individual acts of smoking. If (31) is used about a single occasion of smoking, then the non-sequential use implies that it refers to future activity. Similarly with examples like

(32) Emma leaves by train

The corresponding expanded forms cannot be interpreted as general statements. They refer to single events in either present or future time.

With atelic predicates, the simple present may be interpreted as a general statement or as a reference to a single event in either present or future time, as in

(33) Emma feels fine

whereas the corresponding expanded form can only refer to a single event.

§17 The temporal contour of the non-sequential use of the present tense forms may be drawn as follows: Both the simple and the expanded form may refer to future time. As far as reference to present time is concerned, the difference may be summarized as follows:

The expanded form refers to an activity or a process taking place in a cognizable way at the moment of speech, an activity which has started and is not yet completed. The simple tense form does not imply that the activity is taking place at the moment of speech, but it is compatible with present activity. For example, **The sun is rising is the east** denotes a state such that the sun has become visible, but has not yet risen completely above the horizon. **The sun rises in the east** may be said at any time, including when the sun is rising.

What the latter sentence is about is the movements of the sun and the earth in relation to each other. **The teacher is sitting near the blackboard** means that he has sat down there and has not got up again. **The teacher sits near the blackboard** means that this is where his place is, and he need not be sitting there when the utterance is made.

§18 Of course there are many more subtleties in the use of the simple and expanded present tense forms, but for a discussion of these we refer the reader to Chapter 4. From a tense-oriented point of view, the only important point to stress is that whatever the present forms may mean, they all share the common negative characteristic of not being able to state expressly that the events referred to are in past time, or that they took place earlier than something else. This means that the present tense forms may be viewed as unmarked contrasts to both the past tense and the perfect. And as in all other cases, unmarked forms may carry a broad variety of different meanings.

REFERENCES

Advanced Learner's Dictonary of Current English, Third Edition, London, Oxford University Press, 1974

Allen, Keith: Nouns and countability, **Language**, vol. 56, 1980, pp. 541 - 567

Allen, Robert L.: **The verb system of present-day American English**, The Hague, Mouton, 1966

Andersen J.S. & Conrad, B. & Harpøth, T. & Jensen, P.A. & Svagin, S. & Svendsen,J.: Pragmatics of the simple and expanded present. A speech act analysis. In **Occational Papers 1976 - 1977**. Publications of the Department of English, University of Copenhagen, vol. 5, pp. 12 - 63. Copenhagen, Akademisk Forlag, 1978

Austin, J.L.: **How to do things with words**, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1962

Austin, J.L.: Other Minds. In **Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society**, Supplementary Series 20, pp. 148 - 187, 1949

Austin, J.L.: Performative-Constative. In **Philosophy and Ordinary Language**, C.E: Caton (ed.), pp 22 - 54

Bache, Carl: The semantics of grammatical categories: a dialectal approach, **Journal of Linguistics**, vol. 21, 1985, pp 51 - 77

Bloomfield, Leonard: **Language**, London, Allen & Unwin, 1935

Calver, Edward: The uses of the present tense forms in English. In **Language**, vol. 22, 1946, pp 317 - 325. Reprinted in Schopf (ed.)

Caton, C.E. (ed.): **Philosophy and ordinary language**. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1963

Chafe, Wallace L.: **Meaning and the structure of language**, The University of Chicago Press, 1970

Comrie, B.: **Aspect: An introduction to the study of verbal aspect and related problems**. Cambridge, University Press, 1976

Conrad, Bent: Reference without meaning, **Acta Linguistica Hafniensia**, vol. 19, no. 1, Copenhagen 1985

Corbett, G.G.: The agreement hierarchy, **Journal of Linguistics**, vol 15, 1979, pp 203 - 244

Davidson, D. & Harman, G. (eds.): **Semantics of natural language**, Dordrecht, Reidel, 1972

Diver, William: The chronological system of the English verb, **Word**, vol. 19, 1963, pp 141 - 181

Diver, William: The modal system of the English verb, **Word**, vol. 20, 1964, pp 322 - 352

Fickett, Joan G.: Tense and Aspect in Black English, **Journal of English Linguistics**, vol. 6, 1972, pp. 17-19.

Fillmore, Charles F.: The case for case. In Bach & Harms (eds.): **Universals in linguistic theory**, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968

Garey, Howard B.: Verbal aspect in French, **Language**, vol. 33, 1957, pp 91 - 110

Goldsmith, John & Woisetschlaeger, Erich: **The logic of the progressive aspect**. Mimeograph, Indiana University Linguistics Club, Bloomington, 1976, 14 pp. Revised version in **Linguistic Inquiry**, vol. 13, 1982, pp 79 - 89

Grice, H.P.: Logic and conversation. In Cole & Morgan (eds.): **Syntax and Semantics**, vol. 3, pp 41 - 58. New York, Academic Press, 1975

Harman, Gilbert: Deep structure as logical form. In Davidson & Harman (eds.): **Semantics of natural language**, Dordrecht, Reidel, 1972, pp 25 - 47

Harris, Z.S.: **Methods in structural linguistics**, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1951

Hatcher, Anna Granville: The use of the progressive form in English, a new approach. In **Language**, vol. 27, 1951, pp 254 - 280. Reprinted in Schopf (ed.).

Hjelmslev, Louis: De grammatiske kategorier, **Translatøren**, vol. 3, 1941

Hjelmslev, Louis: Om numerus og genus, **Festskrift til Christian Møller**, Copenhagen 1956

Jensen, Povl Johannes: **Det latinske Perfektsystem**. With a summary in English. Copenhagen, Munksgaard, 1941.

Jespersen, Otto: **A Modern English grammar on historical principles**, vol. 4, London, Allen & Unwin, 1931

Jespersen, Otto: **The philosophy of grammar**, London, Allen & Unwin, 1924

Joos, Martin: **The English verb: form and meanings**. Madison and Milwaukee, University of Wisconsin Press, 1964

Juul, Arne: The category of number in Modern English, **English Studies**, vol 53, 1972 pp 1 - 23

Juul, Arne: **On concord of number in Modern English**, Publications of the Department of English, University of Copenhagen, 1975

King, Larry D.: The semantics of tense, orientation, and aspect in English. **Lingua**, vol. 59, 1983, pp 101 - 154

Koschmieder, Erwin: **Zeitbezug und sprache: Ein Beitrag zur Aspekt- und Tempusfrage.** Leipzig und Berlin, 1929

Koschmieder, Erwin: Zu den Grundfragen der Aspekttheorie, **Indogermanische Forschungen,** vol. 53, 1935, pp 280 - 300

Leech, Geoffrey N.: **Meaning and the English verb.** London, Longman, 1971

Lyons, John: **Introduction to theoretical linguistics.** Cambridge University Press, 1968

Lyons, John: **Semantics,** vols. 1 and 2. Cambridge University Press, 1977

Madvig, Joan Nicolai: **Latinsk Ordføjningslære.** København 1895

McCoard, Robert W.: **The English perfect: Tense-choice and pragmatic inferences.** Amsterdam, North-Holland, 1978

Palmer, F.R.: **A linguistic study of the English verb.** London, Longman, 1974

Perkins, Michael R.: **Modal expressions in English.** London, Frances Pinter, 1983

Quirk, Randolph et al.: **A grammar of contemporary English.** London, Longman, 1972

Quirk, Randolph et al.: **A comprehensive grammar of the English language.** London, Longman, 1985

Reichenbach, Hans: **Elements of symbolic logic,** London and New York, Macmillan, 1947

Ryle, Gilbert: **The concept of mind.** London, Hutchinson, 1949

Schibsbye, Knud: **A Modern English grammar,** London, Oxford University Press, 1965

Schibsbye, Knud: **Om de udvidede verbalformers begreb og anvendelse i moderne engelsk**. København, Munksgaard, 1936

Schousboe, Steen: Om aspekt, med særligt henblik på skellet mellem de simple og udvidede verbalformer i moderne engelsk. **Publications on English Themes**, vol. 2. Department of English, University of Copenhagen, 1986

Schopf, Alfred (ed.): **Der englische Aspekt**. Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974

Searle, J.R.: **Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language**. Cambridge University Pres, 1969

Sørensen, Holger Steen: Meaning. In **To Honor Roman Jacobson**, Paris, Mouton, 1967, pp 1876 - 1889

Sørensen, Holger Steen: On the semantic unity of the perfect tense, **English Studies presented to R.W. Zandvoort**. A supplement to **English Studies**, vol. 45, pp 74 - 83. Amsterdam 1964

Tarski, A: The semantic conception of truth, **Philosophy and phenomenological research**, 4, 1944, pp 341 - 375

Toulmin, S.E. & Baier, K: On describing. In Caton (ed.): **Philosophy and ordinary language**, pp 194 - 219

Twaddel, W. Freeman: **The English verb auxiliaries**, 2. ed., Providence, Brown University Press, 1965

Urmson, J.O.: Parenthetical verbs. In Caton (ed.): **Philosophy and oridnary language**, pp 220 - 240

INDEX

agent-controlled 54
agglutinating 32
ALD 19
Allen, K. 26
Allen, R. L. 22, 98
allomorph 31, 32
American structuralism 11
Andersen, J. et al. 60
antecedent 39, 41
anteriority 101
arithmetical number 30
aspect 49ff.
atelic 53, 54, 67, 105
Austin, J. L. 52

Bache, C. 12, 14
back-shifting 102
Baier & Toulmin 60
bifurcated nouns 44
Bloomfield, L. 31

Calver, E. 59, 60
category, grammatical 12, 60
, primary 12
, secondary 12
Chafe, W. L. 12
closed set 52
closed system 71
compact, the 44, 45
compulsion (modal) 88
Comrie, B. 51
concord 38 - 41
Conrad, B. 15
Corbett, G.G. 40
co-reference 39, 40
countability 17ff.

deep structure 12

deictic 14, 15, 62, 73, 76, 82, 93, 95
denotation 15, 25, 88
description 60 - 65
discrete, the 44 - 45
disposition 59 - 67
distal 97
Dive., W. 98, 103
durative 52

equation, proportional 33
European structuralism 11, 15

Fickett, J. G. 78
Fillmore, C. F. 12
formal 11, 23
frame-theory 55 - 58

Garey, H. B. 53
generic 13, 30, 60
Goldsmith, J 60
grammatical category 12, 13, 29 45, 52, 77
grammatical concord 40
Grice, H. P. 66

Harris, Z. S. 31
Hatcher, A. G. 51, 52, 60, 62
hierarchy of concord 40
Hjemslev, L. 11, 14, 41 - 45
homonymy 32, 74, 75

indefinite past 98
imperfective aspect 51
inflectional category 25
inflectional form 33
intensive plural 45

Jensen, P. J. 74, 75
Jespersen, O. 11, 15, 41, 55, 56, 66, 73 - 81, 85
Joos, M. 14, 57, 84, 97
Juul, A. 44

King, L. D. 55, 65
Koschmieder, E. 52, 78

Leech, G. N. 57, 58
limited duration 57 ff.
Lyons, J. 11, 14, 15, 54, 83

Madvig, J. N. 73 - 81
marked 13, 14, 60
mathematical number 29, 30, 45 - 47
McCoard, R. W. 96, 97
momentary verbs 52, 57
Montague grammar 11
mutual implication 83

necessity (modal) 90
neutralization 85 - 87
nexus 41
non deictical 93
non - sequential 62 - 65, 104
non - stative 54
notional 11, 73, 74, 79, 88
number - specific 35
numerical meaning 38

obligation (modal) 88
obligatory category 30

Palmer, F. R. 97, 98
parenthetical verbs 63, 64
perfective aspect 51
performative 52, 64
Perkins, M. R. 90
phase 84 - 87
point of reference 79 ff.
of speech 79ff.
of the event 79 ff.
possibility (modal) 90
pragmatic(s) 15, 16, 42, 52 59, 63, 65
predication 41
predictability (modal) 59 87 ff.
premodifiers 19, 23, 24, 34-37
presupposition 15
privative meaning 14
prophetic **shall** 87
proportional equation 33
propositon 64
psychological verbs 63
punctual verbs 52

Quirk, R. et al. 19, 57, 86

recategorization 19 - 23
rection 21
Reichenbach, H. 79 - 82
remote, (=past tense) 97
Ryle, G. 59

Saussure, F. 11
Schibsbye, K. 57, 58
Searle, J. R. 52
semantic concord 40
semantic rule 38
sequential 62 - 65, 82, 83, 104
shifters 15
sign (linguistic) 11, 15
Sørensen, H. S. 11, 15, 95
speech act 15, 52, 59, 60, 63, 65
speech event 14
stative 53, 54, 57
strict desciption 60 - 65
structuralism 11
European 15
American 11
suppletion 26
syncretism 86

Tarski, A. 15
telic 51, 53, 66, 67, 89, 94, 104
temporal contour 51 - 54, 105
Toulmin & Baier 60
transformational grammar 11, 12
truth - condition 62
truth - conditional semantics 15, 16
truth - value 61
Twaddell, W. F. 97

unmarked 13, 14
Urmson, J. O. 64

verbal number concord 37, 38
volition (modal) 88

Woisetschlaeger, E. 60

zero - allomorph 32

Vol. 8. Pia Christensen: William Shakespeare. King Lear. De ødipale konflikter hos personerne i King Lear på grundlag af kilder og eventyr. 1988.

Vol. 9. Christian Koch og Eva Hartby: Bibliografi over publikationer fra Engelsk Institut. II, 1976-1988. 1988.

Vol. 10. En eftermiddag på Amager. 1989.

Vol. 11. Gorm Schou-Rode: Informationssøgning 1: Trykte kilder til informationssøgning inden for engelsk/amerikansk sprog, litteratur, samfund og historie. 1989.

Vol. 12. Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen: Fra T.S. Eliots verden. Eliot som kritiker, samfundsdebattør og digter. 1989.

Vol. 13. Eva Rask Knudsen: Tilbage til fremtiden. Australsk aboriginal litteratur siden '64. 1989.

Vol. 14. Bent Conrad og Steen Schousboe: Meaning and English Grammar. 1989.

ISBN 87-88648-13-3
ISSN 0902-4581